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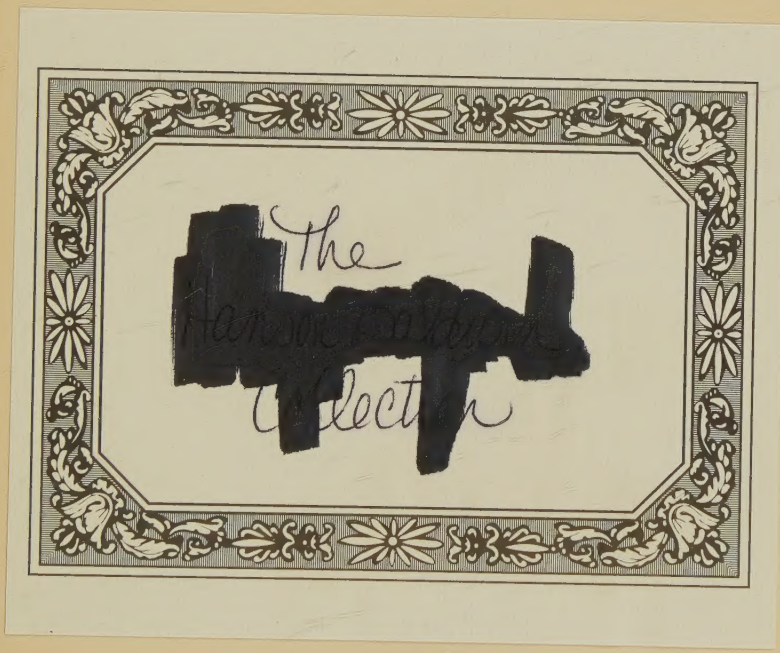

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BY WAY OF CAPE HORN

THE *GRACE HARWAR* PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

BY WAY OF CAPE HORN

BY

A. J. VILLIERS

Author of "FALMOUTH FOR ORDERS"

Illustrated with Photographs taken by
RONALD GREGORY WALKER AND THE AUTHOR

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HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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To

the memory

of

RONALD WALKER

Could I but lie in the ocean deep,
'Neath the slumbering surges ever to sleep,
Where waves eternal stir the sands
And move the seaweed's sodden strands;
Buried for aye in the Sea's deep bed,
Dead to the world: to myself not dead;
Listening there to the breakers boom,
Watching the sunlight's filtered gloom
Till the Sea shall cast up her dead.

RONALD WALKER.

Written about two years before he was buried from the poop of the Finnish full-rigged ship *Grace Harwar*, on the road to Cape Horn.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE CUTTING	3
II.	LAST OF HER CLASS	21
III.	FELLOW ADVENTURERS	50
IV.	FIRST WEEKS	70
V.	"ALL WELL"	91
VI.	"HE IS DEAD!"	114
VII.	THE COST	129
VIII.	THE GHASTLY NIGHT	153
IX.	FIFTY-SEVEN DAYS	175
X.	AFTERWARDS	193
XI.	THE WIND CHANGE	211
XII.	SHIPS AND THE SEA	225
XIII.	BETTER DAYS	258
XIV.	JIM'S YARN	274
XV.	THE TRAGEDY OF THE DISEASED PIG	291
XVI.	THE "RACE"	312
XVII.	JOURNEY'S END	328

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE *GRACE HARWAR* PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC . . . . . *frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

RONALD WALKER 24

CAPTAIN SVENSSON—IN LEATHER COAT—AND THE CHIEF MATE 24

ON THE WAY TO CAPE HORN 72

IN BETTER WEATHER, SAILING IN A LEE SEA . . 72

A DECK VIEW, FROM THE BOWSPRIT 94

LOOKING ALONG THE LEE SIDE FROM THE POOP . 94

GETTING IN THE MAINS'L IN A BLOW . . . 122

MAKING FAST A SAIL AT SEA 122

AFTER THE STORM: STRETCHING THE HALLIARDS AT THE MAIN CAPSTAN 140

CROJACK BRACE! A HAUL ON THE MIZZEN BRACES IN A CAPE HORN SEA 140

SHIPPING A SEA! 162

A SEA SMASHING ABOARD THE *GRACE HARWAR* . . 162

HOVE-TO 194

THE *GRACE HARWAR* PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE WEATHER SIDE 194

UNBENDING THE BLOWN-OUT MIZZEN TOPGALLANT SAIL 216

FACING PAGE

LOOKING UP THE MAINMAST 216

GETTING IN THE MAIN UPPER TOPGALLANT SAIL . 238

BENDING THE MAIN ROYAL IN THE TROPICS . 238

THE BOWS FROM ALOFT 280

LOOSING THE MIZZEN LOWER TOPS'L . . . 280

JOURNEY'S END—THE *GRACE HARWAR* ANCHORED IN QUEENSTOWN HARBOUR 326

DECK VIEW IN SUNNY WEATHER 326

Map at end of book

CHART OF THE *GRACE HARWAR'S* VOYAGE

BY WAY OF CAPE HORN

CHAPTER I

THE CUTTING

THERE was an atmosphere of somnolence about the sub-editor's room and of decrepitude in the reporters'. Nobody occupied the ancient chairs; no one pored over the dusty files, nor sought to operate the broken-down typewriters. The assignment book, much corrected and much cursed, lay open at the previous day's date; a score of heavy initials signified their owners' disapproval opposite the entries of a score-odd footling engagements, unimportant meetings, unproductive "rounds," trifling interviews, useless conferences, boring receptions, at all of which vast numbers of persons of utterly no importance got upon their feet, said their remarks would be brief, and never kept their word. In a corner, upon a breast-high bench, were three files of the morning daily which the office produced. Loose pages hung from them untidily; their columns were cut and hacked about as much as they well could be, and cuttings and derelict pieces of paper lay cluttered round in mute contempt of the large and dusty notice above them which read "These files must not be cut." On a low table along the wall lay a copy of Lloyds' Register for 1903, a much battered and ill-used "Who's Who" for 1920, and a pot of paste. Above the fireplace was a notice-board, covered with cloth that had once been green. No correspondence waited here hopefully to be claimed. There was nothing,

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save a lodge notice of some kind for a reporter who had died seven years before and an income tax demand, for a very much alive young reporter, that had even less chance of being rescued from the despair of its surroundings. Draughts wandered unhealthily about, stealing in through ill-fitting windows; there was cigarette ash on the floor, and a pile of galley proofs, hot from the lino room downstairs at an early hour that morning, had been flung into a coal box in a corner. The telephone rang spasmodically, now and again. Nobody answered it.

Not that that mattered much. There wasn't much likelihood of missing any news—real news—that way; mostly the persons who called up the office wanted to have their names erased from the reports of police court proceedings, or inserted into chronicles of social happenings. If by any chance there were a real good murder going for the moment unpursued, well, the corpse would still be there and the murder still unsolved in the afternoon.

It was Sunday morning—a lovely Tasmanian Sunday morning in March, 1929, with sunshine and a fresh happiness in the air—outside, of course. Indoors in the newspaper office it was cheerless and grey enough. But then there was no need, on this one day in the week, for anyone to be there at that early hour. Sunday morning, if there were no church services worth reporting—there seldom were—and no crowded sports gathering of the previous afternoon to be written up—there always was—the majority of the reporters had free. There was an instruction in the all-powerful assignment book, of course, to the effect that all copy from the previous day's engagements had to be in by two on Sunday afternoon, for

the Chief of Staff knew that his men, once the actual function itself was over, liked to be free of work for their Saturday evenings and let the writing-up wait until the morrow. At least on Saturday nights they could be with their wives, if they had to pay for it by scribbling away their Sunday mornings. And then they could do that at home.

But there were some stalwarts who had no interest save the office, who lived for nothing but their work and the joy of growling about it. They had given up their souls to journalism for so long that now they never looked for anything else. They had no other interest. If they were not at the office, working or yarning away an hour or two with their fellow reporters, they were asleep. Their wives came into their lives obscurely as persons who cooked meals for them for which they always arrived late, breathless, and in a desperate hurry. They had married before they realised the unfortunate truth that a reporter on a morning newspaper had no mortal right to take unto himself any woman, had nothing to offer any woman save lonely evenings, unshared meals, and lost friends. His life had to be his job, and his joys and his wife had to come from it.

I had been unlucky the previous evening, for once. There had been a bowlers' smoke social or something of the kind—some entertainment at which there had been a little whisky and a great deal of talk. Whatever it was, there must have been sufficient of the whisky to interfere with the chronicling of the talk, and I found myself wandering along the well-known streets leading to the office that bright Sunday morning, hopeful of finding a

usable typewriter not in use that I might hastily run out my report. But there was such a Sunday morning air of depression about the place that I did not care to work. I could not bring myself to begin, and instead dropped into the unoccupied sub-editor's room to browse among his files of other newspapers.

Here, in the columns of a Melbourne daily, I suddenly came across a small paragraph that swept the whole of those surroundings instantly away. There was a picture of a four-masted barque inset into the letterpress, and the paragraph was a reprint of a cutting from a London daily, urging that before it was too late someone who could should ship in one of the big Cape Horn sailing ships that still survived and make a motion picture film of his voyagings. That was the very thing that I had in mind, the very idea that I was working on, the very plan that I had laid, after long consideration, for one voyage more in the ships of sails—one voyage more around Cape Horn that would be productive of a record more vivid than a book. It wasn't my idea, originally. A young yachtsman fellow-reporter had long brooded over it, a brilliant and enterprising youth to whom the majesty of old sails had always been alluring and the call of the sea—the real sea of the winged wind ships—always strong. Ronald Walker was his name: Ronald Gregory Walker, fair-haired, broad-browed, cheerful, smiling. If we had been able to foresee what these ships of wind would mean for him; if we had had the slightest idea of the cost to us of trying to make this motion picture film, then we should never have thought about it and we should never

have gone. At least, I would not have; I think he would have tried, even if he had known.

He wandered in, curiously enough, just as I had finished reading the fateful paragraph.

"I say, laddie," I remember saying, "have a look at this."

He came over to the file and eagerly scanned the cutting.

"We'll have to go now," he said when he had read it, "or some other bright youth will be on to our idea."

"Exactly what I thought—not that there's much chance of anyone else getting in just now, but one never knows, once the thing has been made public. It's most likely that nobody will take any notice of it, but we can't leave it to chance."

"We'll have to go, old man," he said. "There's nothing else for it now."

We discussed the position. The bowling social report was somehow not written, nor was his weekly chronicle of yachting races. For who cared for yachting races, when there was talk of full-rigged ships? And what mattered bowls, when there came the call of adventure? . . . In truth, the call of adventure was loud, but it came at a most inappropriate moment. Our plans had always been that we should not set out until the grain race of 1930. We could not see how we could be ready before then. We knew that there would still be some square-riggers left by then, and the fewer that there were, the more valuable would be the film. We had no filming experience. We were not motion picture camera-men. We had, neither of us, ever operated a motion picture camera. I had once

been sent, by my newspaper, to watch the filming of a portion of a scene from a film of a Tasmanian convict story, to write it up; and for two days I watched the camera-man, the director, and the actors at their work. It was an interesting experience but not an enlightening one. The camera used by that camera-man cost something like £1,500. We had not, and could not get, 1,500 pence. We did not care to tell anyone of our scheme for fear of ridicule; we knew that any quest of capital would be impossible. Besides, we wished to avoid, if at all possible, the risking of anyone else's money in a venture which we knew only too well would be a very great gamble; we were prepared to risk our own, if we could get any, but not to lose somebody else's. We had planned to wait for the following year in order that we might secure some capital, and buy an inexpensive but efficient motion picture camera with which we could give ourselves some experience. The raw film was quite an expensive item, and there were other considerations. Only four months previously I had returned from a voyage in the four-master *Herzogin Cecilie*. I did not care to go straight back to the sea again, before the mast in a Cape Horn square-rigger. It was March, and most of the ships had gone —*Herzogin Cecilie*, *Beatrice*, *Lawhill*, *Archibald Russell*, *C. B. Pedersen*, *Pommern*, *Garthpool*, and all the best of them. There were still a few about, picking up the remnants of the wheat, and it might have been easy enough to ship in one of them. But the point that worried us was that, being March then, a setting out at that time of the year from Australia would mean a winter rounding of the Horn—a ghastly and unpleasant experience, as

more than I had good cause to know. It was not so much the discomfort that worried us; it was the fact that, being winter then in those high southern latitudes, there were only a few hours of light daily and much of that was unusable for photography. Matters like that were of the greatest importance. It would have been much better if we could have waited until the next season, and set out in some well-chosen ship, carefully prepared, with the cameras, the gear, and the *experience* that we so needed.

But we could not have these things. We had to choose, we thought, between setting out without experience and with what gear we could get, and probably not setting out at all. For we knew that if anyone else on earth was taken with the idea and set about its accomplishment, he could not very well be worse equipped for it than we were; we knew that if anyone else began we were finished. We chose to go, then, as we were. . . .

We were greatly taken with this idea of a film of one of the last of the great sailing ships, upon probably one of the last of her voyagings. Written about, it seems dull and uninteresting, but we thought that here was something that was worth trying, at any rate. We wanted to make a picture that would capture some of the stirring beauty of these ships, that would perpetuate, in the realm of shadows at least, something of the glory of their wanderings and the courage of their battles with the sea, that would embody, in some vague and unsatisfactory way, some shadow of the spirit of these lovely old sea wanderers, some glimmer of understanding of the attraction which they hold over those who sail in them. It

had never been done. There had been "shots" of big sailing ships in various films which we had seen, some of them most lovely; but they were incidents, atmosphere, for the most part badly used. Their obvious sincerity was broken down irremediably and utterly detroyed by other scenes depicting ships in tanks, and "sets" which were obviously concocted in studios by persons whose acquaintance with the sea was bounded by books. We had seen heroines, supposedly upon the decks of great ships in terrible storms, registering the most violent anguish against a background of pasteboard waves that never moved; we had seen disaster overtake ships that never sailed, models that looked like nothing that ever floated upon the face of the waters, sailors at work that sailors never did. We wanted to make something *real*, no matter what imperfections it might have. There were very great disadvantages, we were well aware, even if we had both been most experienced camera-men. We had no feminine interest. We had no story. We were prepared to set out, and take what the sea and the voyage gave us. We could interest no great monopoly in our poor schemes. We had a vague idea that if we did try to and should succeed, we would be much more likely to see some ship chartered and some experienced producers and photographers set out than ever to be going ourselves. And whatever there was against us, we had at least this upon our side—that we did have something of the spirit of the sea, and we did bring to the making of this very problematical picture, some understanding of the loveliness of the ship of sails and some real feeling for her beauty, her courage, and her grace.

There was also this very important factor of time. I had always been a little chary of the following season; if it were a bad wheat season in Australia, as like as not there would be few big sailing ships chartered to help carry home the grain. And now that the idea had been broadcast to the world something had to be done about it. Walker said that the modern motion picture camera, even standard size, was almost as fool-proof as the ordinary snap-shot apparatus had been made; we should soon overcome the handicap of no experience. He had made photography—still photography—his hobby for years and had made a study of light and other factors that play so great a part in cinematic art; I had had a little experience of pointing cameras at things, first having inserted a roll of film, and pressing the release catch, and had found that if the light were good (as it generally is at sea) that was all I required to know to get results. I had been doing that in the whaling ship *Sir James Clark Ross* upon her cruise to the Antarctic in 1923-24, and again in the *Herzogin Cecilie* in 1928; but I had never even attempted to handle a motion picture camera . . . We had discovered earlier that a standard size motion picture camera, quite good enough for our purposes, could be bought in Australia for about £40. We had to have two in case one went overboard, or fell from the rigging, or went wrong. We would call at no port to take in fresh supplies on the way. We had to have about eight thousand feet of film, the best we could get. We had to have, pretty quickly, about £300.

We both knew all these things only too well, as we looked at each other across those newspaper files in that

old office—an old office in which we had been reporters for years, among a team of splendid fellows we did not like to leave; we knew that we were about to embark upon a very big proposition indeed. Ronald Walker had not sailed before the mast before. He had never been to sea, save for a voyage or two between Tasmania and New South Wales, and Victoria, as a passenger in the steamers on those services. But the sea was in his blood and he loved his yachts. I had gone to sea straight from school and had been in the half-decks and the foc'sle of a few square-riggers in the Cape Horn trade—perhaps about half a dozen; enough to know sufficient of the life not to return lightheartedly.

What ships were still available for us, if we set out then, young Walker—he was just twenty-two—asked me. I knew that the four-masters *Hougomont* and *Olivebank* were in Port Lincoln, but they must have been almost ready for sea and fully manned by then; my younger brother had shipped already in the *Hougomont* and had left Melbourne to join her some weeks before. She would have been a good shop for the film, she was a big four-masted barque, low in the sides, long, good at flinging the sea over herself, fleet to run before the wind, and heavy to handle for the small crew she had. She was tall, still with the original sail plan with which she had been first built years before on the Clyde; she carried her three royals, and was picturesque enough. She had a long open main deck, somewhat filled with deck-houses but still offering a splendid setting for the scenes we sought; the only thing against her was her wheelhouse. We wanted a ship without a wheelhouse and without brace winches,

and those other man-saving gadgets of later days. We wanted a real old-timer, one on which the frozen wretches making up the crew, on the long bitter run to the Horn, had to stand their frigid tricks at the huge open wheel, unprotected, tortured by the cold fury of the wind, sodden by the ceaseless rain, cut by the merciless hail. We had no desire to share in their misery! But that was part of the life we wished to record on the film, the romance of the helm. A wheelhouse would take it from us. A wheelhouse gave shelter to the crew, and was a boon indeed. It transferred the wheel from the worst place in the ship, in bad weather, to the best. It meant that no man might be swept overboard and drowned by a pooping sea, while he struggled with the helm. It meant shelter, and safety, and some minor degree of comfort. And it meant a loss of some of the most vivid, most striking, and hardest to obtain of the pictures we sought. We wanted to film the real life aboard the Cape Horn ship—a life that would stir people's blood, and bring them from their seats in warm and comfortable cinema halls ashore, and compel in them some fear of the cold heartlessness of the bitter sea, some admiration for the courageous spirits who set out in their old sailing ships and always fought it. There would be, in this film of ours, "shots" of the rolling, sea-swept decks of the sailing ship down below New Zealand on her way to Cape Horn; the great seas would sweep aboard her over each side as she rolled, sweeping triumphantly along the length of her, pressing her down, weighing heavily against her in the fight to stay afloat; and in all this there would go on the endless battle with the sails, the braces, the heavy, back-breaking gear—the puny things with

which man sought to conquer and by the strength of his arm and the spirit that was in him, to win through; the wind-distended, sea-stiffened sails, blown into ribbons time and again on the gaunt high yards; the perilous, exhilarating, mad work upon the rigging of the pitching, terrified ship, high aloft in the shrieking gales and the rain-filled sky; the infinitely more dangerous work on the sea-swept exposure of the decks, from which now and again, despite life-lines and sharp lookouts, the hands went overboard; the straining at the open wheel, with the giant seas raging astern at which the helmsmen did not dare to look, while they strove ceaselessly to keep the running ship somewhere before them; the ice and the snow on deck, and the ghastly physical misery. And then, beyond Cape Horn, the bad weather of winter in the South Atlantic, with more gales and unending slavery; and afterwards, sunshine and happier skies, and milder days and loveliness returned to a sea which did not seem before to know of joy's existence; and so through the Trade Winds, unto the Line, and the doldrum belt, with its torpid calms, and weak cat's-paws of feeble, baffling winds, and heavy downpours of tropic rain; and the North Atlantic, with its ship lanes again and meetings with other vessels, and flying fish, and the weedy outskirts of the Sargasso Sea (for the sailing ship wanders curiously on her voyagings); and at last the haze of England, the sea-swept cliffs and Home . . . We had to sign before the mast and work our way, to get these things; there was no other manner in which we could attempt our scheme. We did not seek to write for owner's permission, and enter into long negotiations concerning

film rights (if such a question were raised) and things. Our plan was to get a job and go, in whatever capacity there were vacancies . . . The *Hougomont* would suit us well, except for the drawback of her wheelhouse, if only there were still a job or two before her mast. We knew that it was mostly easy enough to get a job in the foc'sle of these Finnish sailing ships, when they came to load Australian wheat. They were manned by young Finnish boys, many of whom had paid for the privilege of working in them; it always happened that, in each of the ships, some of these boys deserted in the Australian ports. They had had enough of it. They had discovered that there was little of romance in these ships, and very much of work and horrible discomfort; they looked upon Australia as the land of chance, and did not know anything about its unemployment. They cleared out and left their ships shorter handed than they were before—and that was usually bad enough—and the Finnish captains had to ship what hands they could. I had a friend in Port Lincoln who looked after the loading of these sailers in the little South Australian ports and did what he could to find them suitable crews. Mostly they were glad to sign on Australian farmhands, sturdy, sun-tanned chaps who got an awful shock at first but afterwards settled down into the life and made first-class sailors; now and again they were lucky enough to get real sailors . . .

The *Olivebank* was a little big and also had a wheelhouse. She carried only one royal, which was a good point as far as working her was concerned, but a disadvantage pictorially. She also should have been nearly loaded by then, fully manned and ready for the sea. We

didn't have much hope of getting anything in either of those vessels. There was also the little Finnish barque *Favell*, lying in Wallaroo. But she was a training ship, manned by a horde of Helsingfors apprentices; even if half of them cleared out (as they generally did) she would still have hands enough to take her home. She was a little yacht, of not much more than a thousand tons, and did not need so large a crew to handle her. There was also the Finnish four-master *Ponape* lying in Melbourne, just arrived from the Baltic after a stormy and long passage during which two of her boys had gone overboard and been drowned. She was chartered to load wheat; against her was the fact that she had brace winches and other gadgets, halliard winches and the like, which while they made her working a matter of much greater lightness than it could otherwise have been, robbed her of pictorial value and took from her all possibility of grand pictures of the watch at the lee fore brace, swept under water when she dipped her side. Her fore braces were huge wires wound about a drum arrangement on a house abaft the mainmast and they were dragged about by handles; how could a picture of a watch winding round a winch, high on a deckhead out of the water, compare with the same watch, dragging upon a fearful sodden brace of rope along the wet side of the ship, with the sea and the spume flying everywhere! No, there were better ships for us than the *Ponape* . . .

There remained one other ship which I had not mentioned, one other ship which I had always favoured and in which I had always wanted to sail. This was the ship *Grace Harwar*, a full-rigged ship of some 1,565 net

register tons. She was the last Cape Horn full-rigger in the Australian trade. Year by year the number of the deep-water square-riggers was steadily declining and now their number included only this one full-rigged ship, this last survivor of a rig that had been most popular of all. There were about sixteen big sailing ships still in commission, lifting Australian wheat year by year, when they could get it, in this last trade that was open to them. They sailed out from Europe in ballast, for the most part, and because they all sailed upon the same voyage —round the Horn to the Channel for orders, scupper-deep with wheat—at more or less the same time, it was called a race. It wasn't a race, really, except in those few rare instances when two of them were able to set out from the same port on the same day; and then most of them were in no fit condition to race. They were very old, and had been battling with the sea a long time. They had not been as well looked after as they might have been, as the years passed by and left them relics of another and lovelier age; their rigging was old, and they had few sails. They carried small crews, to keep down costs, and very little canvas because it was so expensive. It was by no means unknown that they should set out upon a long voyage even with insufficient food. If they were not under the Finnish flag they probably would have been under none at all; many of them were known as training ships, but even these carried the smallest of crews and were sadly undermanned. One or two were splendid ships, in grand racing trim always—the *Herzogin Cecilie*, for example, the Swedish *Beatrice*, and perhaps the *Archibald Russell* and one or two more. But for the most part,

if they delivered their cargoes safely, that was as much as could be expected from them. They could not be driven with their small crews in such a trade; sail had to be taken in in time, or quite probably not at all. If they made good passages it was good luck, for the most part; if they made bad ones that was all that could be expected of them. Now and again one set out and never arrived; the beautiful big Danish five-masted barque *Köbenhavn*, strongest, stoutest, and best of them all, was on the missing list then and has never sailed out of it. She set out from Buenos Aires, bound to Australia to load grain, in mid-December, 1928, and she has never arrived nor been seen or heard of anywhere with her seventy boys . . . We were not concerned with the race aspect of the voyage; it was the voyage itself that we wanted, and the *Grace Harwar* looked like the very ship to suit our purpose. She was small and lofty; she carried her three royals, was devoid entirely of brace winches, halliard winches, and all those other things of later days; she had come from Clyde-side before the '90's, and though she had been through many vicissitudes and more than one serious accident, was still much the same lovely old *Grace Harwar* that had first felt the coldness of the sea's embrace upon the narrow Clyde. She had no wheelhouse. Her deck was not too cluttered up with houses; she had but one house, a long low foc'sle abaft the foremast, where the crew had their quarters and where we should be domiciled, if we could get a job. And she was a real Cape Horner. She was out then about two years, and I had something of an idea that her crew would be pretty well fed up with her. She was, as far as I knew, due at Port

Lincoln for orders in ballast from the United States, where she had delivered a guano cargo from a Peruvian island.

I don't know whether it was fate or what it was, but while we stood there, sprawled across those old files discussing our changed plans in that sub-editor's room, an urgent telegram came fluttering down the tube from the G.P.O. next door, and when we opened it, it was to read about the ship *Grace Harwar*. The message was from Fremantle, and recorded the fact that while she had been crossing the Australian Bight on her way from Adelaide to Western Australia, the passenger liner *Jervis Bay* was stopped by the Finnish ship *Grace Harwar*, flying signals of distress and asking for food. She was out 150 days from Wilmington, North Carolina, the *Grace Harwar* was reported to have told the steamer, and her people had nothing to eat. The *Jervis Bay* gave her food and came on.

That had happened five days before, and as she had been then only about one hundred and fifty miles from Port Lincoln, the *Grace Harwar* must long since have arrived.

We surveyed the pink telegram with grave interest. It capped our discussion, and decided our plans. "I don't much fancy her running out of food," Ronald Walker said, "but a hundred and fifty days is a long time. She oughtn't to be that long going home. We'll have to risk it, laddie; it's only one factor more in a pretty heavy array against us, and we've graver things to think of than that. Dammit, we'll go."

Four days later we had gone.

Urgent telegrams secured us jobs in the foc'sle of the *Grace Harwar*—"Glad to have you," her captain wired —and cameras and film (we could get only 6,000 feet in all Australia) were ordered from Sydney, the only city where apparently they were available. We resigned our journalistic berths, booked passages to Melbourne, spent an hour or two there getting together the equipment which had been hurriedly forwarded from Sydney and yarning with the youthful carpenter of the *Ponape*, and went on by night express to Adelaide and so to Wallaroo.

Late on the night of Monday, March 18, we arrived at Wallaroo, left all of our many belongings in a hotel where the proprietor eyed us with suspicion, and set off straightway to find the ship.

CHAPTER II

LAST OF HER CLASS

EARLY in the evening of April 17, 1929, the *Grace Harwar* weighed anchor and put out to sea. It was a beautiful evening, and except for a few girls we didn't know waving on a wharf, nobody took any notice. But a few things had happened before then. We learned something about the history of the ship, for one thing, and had a chance to make some brief survey of her story. And what a story it would be, if only it could all be discovered! That would be a real book of the sea.

The *Grace Harwar* is a steel full-rigged ship, of 1,749 tons gross register and 1,565 tons net—neither big, for a full-rigged ship, nor small. She was average. She was built by W. Hamilton and Co. at Port Glasgow in 1889, so she was forty years old when we joined her. She was launched with the name she still bears, but who the real Grace Harwar was I have no idea. She was built for W. Montgomery, of Mark Lane, London, and was his crack ship for years. I have been unable to discover much about her earlier history; about all I know is that an old salt, coming aboard in Glasgow at the end of our voyage, told us a yarn about being in her once in 1893 on a passage from British Columbia to the Channel which took 169 days—not fast, for a new ship, but then a ship is not to be judged by any one passage she may make.

Luck plays so great a part in the winds that blow at sea and the fortune that they bring to the ships of sails. She has made some very good passages even in these later years, when she is not by any means a new ship and not always in the best condition, either—thirty-seven days New South Wales to Chile is not so bad, nor is one hundred and eight days Melbourne to Falmouth, nor yet forty-five days from Buenos Aires to Port Lincoln. She is not a clipper nor yet a fast ship; neither is she a barrel-bowed stodgy drifter. She has good lines, albeit she can carry nearly three thousand tons of cargo; she has a lovely bow and a nice run aft, and sitting deep-laden in the water I cannot recall a lovelier old ship. She is a typical deep-waterman, a true sister of the Horn. Her three masts have a graceful loftiness and the sweep of her deck is entrancing to the sailor's eye; not for her the ugliness of stump t'gallant masts and the bare utility of steam. She has no steam. She has no power of any kind, save for a small petrol winch by the main hatch for working out coal on the West Coast and helping get in the grain at small Australian ports. She has no brace winches, nor halliard winches; she has six capstans—four on the main deck and one each on the poop and forecastle head—and that is all the power she is allowed. She has a "patent" windlass at which Nelson might well have scoffed and Drake himself have scorned. It is a huge back-breaking, unhandy, unreliable, unwieldy, despairing arrangement of a drum round which the heavy cable is passed a full turn, in from the hawse and round and down the spurling pipe to the chain locker; the whole is "operated" by the unsatisfactory and infinitely painful process of all hands

—a watch a side—laying on to steel bars inserted in a crude arrangement of gears and heaving on them, up one side and down the other, and by the exertion of every ounce of brute perspiring force in them gradually inducing the cable to come in half a link a time. You get in three links and two slip out. The heavy shackles which mark the tens of fathoms of chain won't come in at all. When the cable is short and the anchor just breaking out, God help you. The mate flings his giant exhorting frame in despair upon the sweat-stained steel, too exhausted to cry out more and summon the tired crew to greater and greater effort; there is no chanteying here! No crying out, no mellow sailors' shouts of "Yo-ho" and all the rest of it, nothing but the grunting, the straining sighs and streaming perspiration of a dozen odd hands, striving to achieve an impossible feat upon an impossible, hell-designed apparatus. They do it, too; they manage. You never give in in sailing ships; you have only the strength of your arm to aid you and a spirit that sees that it does not let you down.

That windlass was by far the worst feature of the poor old ship. Of course the capstan was supposed to be coupled with it, and with a big crew such as she may have carried in her better days, maybe it would be easy enough—or at least no worse than in other ships—to get that anchor in by all hands tramping round the capstan on the forecastle head an hour or two, to the sweet strains of a violin and the unprintable words of a chantey, or the curses of a hardcase mate, when, for want of breath, the will to sing died out. But we had no big crew in the *Grace Harwar* when we set out for the sea, and the

windlass was so heavy that we could not shift it an inch by the use of the capstan.

She carried double t'gallants on the fore and main, and single on the mizzen, as was mostly the way with full-rigged ships. She still had her three royals. I did hear a story somewhere that she was launched originally with single t'gallants on all three masts but the sails were so huge all hands could not manage them, and she struggled into Cape Town dismasted on her first voyage. I do not know whether that is true or not, but many bigger full-rigged ships and four-masted barques carried single t'gallants and never came to grief over them. The *Grace Harwar,* in 1929, still had her full original sail plan. She was the same *Grace Harwar* that had first set out from the Clyde, forty years before. She had the same wheel, with its brass boss telling the story of her builders and the little helmsman's bell inscribed with her name. She had the same decks, now much worn and inclined to leak a little, here and there, especially under the influence of the hot Australian sun. She had no new plate in her, save for a few aft where a steamer had collided with her once, and a few for'ard where another steamer had come into collision with her in Falmouth Bay. She had the same old capstans, now rusty and worn away a bit at the bar holes; here and there a new stay had been fitted, and she had been dismasted more than once in her long career so that the upper yards were not those upon which she had spread her first wings . . . She has but one house on deck, a long low foc'sle, combining the galley, the sail-maker's and the carpenter's cabins as well. There is no half-deck beneath the boat skids aft, as most full-riggers

RONALD WALKER

CAPTAIN SVENSSON—IN LEATHER COAT—AND THE CHIEF MATE

used to carry. She housed her English apprentices, I believe, in a roomy cabin in the fore part of the poop, now used as a sail locker. Now she carries no apprentices, or perhaps it would be truer to say that the apprentices are now in the foc'sle and she carries no sailors. We went to sea with thirteen hands before the mast, and according to the owner that was one too many. Thirteen hands for a ship like that! If they had been grown men it might have been all right—grown men experienced in sailing ships and well used to the sea. But they were boys, little chaps, some of them, of sixteen and so. Six were called able seamen and the rest were boys. Their average age was about nineteen. Three had never been to sea before. Only two had been round Cape Horn, and neither of them liked it. There were only three grown men in the foc'sle; fortunately all three were real deep-sea sailors, well used to sail.

Somehow nobody seemed to notice that our number made the allegedly unlucky thirteen. We didn't total it up until later . . .

There we were, anyway, thirteen strong, in a ship that had probably carried almost as many apprentices, not to mention the sailors besides, in her palmier days under the British flag; thirteen strong, to set out upon the worst voyage in the world at the worst time of the year, members of a profession in which, if one stayed long enough at it, there was no very great likelihood of dying of old age. Looking back now, it seems as if it may have been almost inviting certain death for some of us.

We noticed, when we first saw the ship in daylight, that the footrope on the starboard side of the fore lower t'gal-

lant yard had rusted through and carried away; the main lower t'gallant yard and the mizzen upper tops'l yard appeared to owe something for their support to wire lashings; the wheel was rickety and was lashed about with gasket stuff; a look in the sail locker aft did not disclose many spare sails. But we had joined the ship then, with a definite aim; we could not be troubled about these matters. We knew that most other sailing ships still afloat were in much the same condition. Some were much worse. They leaked. We did not like the broken foot-rope, because it is upon the reliability of the footropes that one's life most hangs; if they go there is no hope. It is bad enough, sometimes, with everything in perfect condition . . . The fore royal backstay, on the starboard side, had torn itself from its rigging screw. Some Americans who were in the ship but didn't intend to stay said we were mad to go. Well, we had our reasons; and we knew what we were doing and what we were setting out for, which was more than they did. They were hoboes who had shipped in the *Grace Harwar* in North Carolina and had since never ceased either to regret it or to talk about it, loudly and at infinite length. Save for two of them who were decent young chaps, run away from home in New York or somewhere, the bunch wasn't worth twopence. One had never become accustomed to the work aloft and another hadn't left his bunk much, all the voyage. They joined in Wilmington and they left in Wallaroo, and that was their story . . .

Prior to about 1910, I know little of the *Grace Harwar*. She went her ways about the world in peace, and little was known of her and little thought. She was a Lime-

juice full-rigged ship, and that was all. She was mostly, I think, in the West Coast trade—that is, from the Bristol Channel, out to some port in Chile or Peru and home again with nitrates or maybe guano from a Peruvian island, out round the Horn from east to west and home round that dreaded promontory again the other way. She "tramped" where cargoes could be obtained for her, and carried anything; across many, many thousands of miles, she carried nothing at all. She spent years hunting in ballast for cargoes, and years as well laid up at dingy anchorages or by unkempt wharves in docks. But for the most part she carried on her lonely voyages, now and again showing up in the docks of Glasgow or of Antwerp, the Thames and the Tyne, the anchorages of Valparaiso and Antofagasta Bay, the quays of Melbourne, San Francisco, Cape Town, Buenos Aires. She made no spectacular voyagings. She featured in no newspaper reports; she came quietly into the ports where she had cargoes to deliver, and as quietly set out for the sea again, to hunt for more. Sometimes she lost somebody, over the side or out of the rigging, as all wind ships do. There is a shadowy story of a voyage that once she made when the captain's wife died at sea, and he pickled the body in a salt beef cask and brought it on to port with him, in order that examination might be made and proof disclosed that he did not murder her as his crew swore he did. They swore that they had heard them quarrelling, and the sound of blows. There were ugly scenes over it, and there had been uglier ones before. A cut-throat gang from the hell-holes of old 'Frisco manned her that voyage, and it all but ended in mutiny.

Since 1910, the lovely old ship has ridden out a cyclone in Iquique Bay, been in collision there, and in Falmouth Bay, and outside the Clyde; been frozen up for a fortnight with her towboat in the Kristiania Fjord; been dismasted and flung ashore in Mobile; washed out fore and aft off the pitch of the Horn and damaged so badly that she had to run, chartless and without instruments, in distress for Montevideo—harassed by a hundred gales and driven before a hundred storms, face to face with the end, more times than one. She has sailed from Iquique, laden down to capacity with nitrates, round the Horn twelve thousand miles to Falmouth without a bowsprit; she has lost both anchors outside Bremerhaven in a gale and stood out into the height of the storm insufficiently ballasted, woefully undermanned, sorely handicapped by everything save the spirit of her calling and the lovely responsiveness she has always brought to the aid of man.

By good fortune the story of one of the most remarkable of the *Grace Harwar's* voyages—and one of the last she made under the British flag—has been recorded by Captain T. C. Fearon in that unique little sailors' magazine, "Sea Breezes," which the P.S.N. Co. publish monthly at Liverpool. (That is one of the best things they do.) Captain Fearon was in the *Grace Harwar* on the voyage when she was in collision no less than four times and had to sail twelve thousand miles without a bowsprit.

"I sailed from London in the ship *Grace Harwar* on July 30, 1910, for Talcahuano, in Chile, with a cargo of Portland cement in barrels," writes Captain Fearon. "We had light winds and fine weather down Channel and in the North Atlantic, and crossed the Line thirty-four

days out. We experienced mostly light winds and fine weather from the Equator to 50 S., when we fell in with the usual stormy weather met with in that part of the world. We were nineteen days from 50 S. in the Atlantic to 50 S. in the Pacific, doubling the Horn, with several heavy gales during that time in the usual manner. While we were hove to in a westerly gale a sea struck the ship just abaft the fore rigging and washed everything off the top of the deckhouse, although everything was well lashed down. It also smashed in one of the solid teak doors, washing the men's beds and clothing out through the lee door . . . Without further mishap we arrived at Talcahuano on October 25, eighty-seven days out from London. We discharged part cargo at Talcahuano, Valparaiso, and Huasco. In Huasco we took in ballast and sailed to Newcastle, New South Wales, arriving there on February 2, 1911, fifty-six days out. From there we sailed on March 9 with a coal cargo for Coquimbo, Chile, arriving there on April 15, after a passage of thirty-nine days. We discharged part cargo there and part at Iquique, where we afterwards took in nitrates for the return passage to Europe. While the ship lay at Iquique, a place of almost universal fine weather where storms are almost unknown, a most unexpected thing occurred—a six hours' hurricane . . . As soon as the wind commenced our stern anchor began to drag—ships at Iquique are moored in tiers, abreast of each other, with stream anchors and chains taken out astern—and it became necessary to slip the stern moorings to enable the ship to swing head to wind. When the ship got head to wind we dropped the second bower anchor. Shortly after this the vessel next

to us in the tier, the French steamer *Magellan*, of Dunkirk, swung head to wind with her stern under our bow, and though we slacked out all the chain we had we could not get clear of her. After ramming her until the whole of our headgear and our figurehead were utterly destroyed and our steel bowsprit bent up until it was almost on end, our cable parted in the hawsepipe and we swung clear. We then let go our spare bower, with a steel hawser bent to it . . .

"After blowing hard for three hours from the northeast, there was a calm period of about five minutes and then the wind blew as hard as ever from the southwest. All the vessels then swung round again and collided with each other a second time. A large four-masted German sailing ship dragged into us but eventually got clear without doing much damage. All this time it was so dark that we could see nothing of what was going on around us.

"After blowing from the southwest for about three hours the gale ceased about daylight. What a scene of destruction was then revealed. Every vessel in port, some twenty-seven in all, was more or less damaged. One Italian ship had sunk at her moorings and a large French ship had to be beached immediately to prevent her sinking. In the heavy surf that was running she fell right over on the beach, and became a total loss. About half the lighters in the port were sunk or damaged, and no cargo was touched for about a week. It took all that to get things straightened up a little again . . . On the night of June 21, 1911, we had a repetition of the gale, though it was not quite so severe on this second occasion. All the ships broke adrift again and once more collided

with each other. A large German steamer got across our bow this time and completely finished the bowsprit. After that we had fine weather and no more trouble.

"After holding a survey of the damage it was decided to cut the bowsprit off about ten feet outside the knightheads, and as it was impossible to get a new bowsprit in that place, the ship obtained permission to put to sea without one. We sailed from Iquique on July 26 and after an uneventful passage of a hundred and fourteen days arrived at Falmouth for orders on November 17. When we were entering Falmouth harbour, owing to an error of judgment on the part of the pilot in taking too much sail off her before reaching the anchorage, the ship came into collision with the Italian steamer *Oriana*, lying at anchor, doing damage to both vessels. Our port anchor was broken in two during the collision and dropped in the water, leaving us with but one anchor since we had lost one at Iquique. After getting two new anchors and a full length of chain cable the ship proceeded in tow for Hamburg. My wife had been with me the whole of the voyage, but after so many collisions I decided to go to Hamburg without her. However, we arrived there without incident on December 1, discharged the cargo and repaired the ship there, and left again on February 1, 1912, for Cardiff in tow. We arrived there on February 6, and there I said good-bye to the old *Grace Harwar*."

It certainly was a remarkable voyage. There was an Admiralty suit over the collision in Falmouth Bay afterwards, when counsel for the Italian steamer argued that the *Grace Harwar* was in fault because she was in an unseaworthy condition without a bowsprit. The learned

judge, however, ruled that, as she had just sailed a matter of twelve thousand miles, including a rounding of the Horn, in that condition, that contention could scarcely stand, and the master, officers, and crews of the *Grace Harwar* were exonerated entirely. Captain Fearon does not tell us much about the handicap of making a long voyage without a bowsprit and it does not appear to have made much difference; but it must have called for skilful seamanship at times. It would mean a general weakening of the ship and a general lowering of her capacity to carry sail, as well as affecting the steering whenever the wind was anywhere but dead aft and probably giving her a tendency to get in irons when she went about.

By the way, those passages are not bad for a full-lined ship like the old *Grace Harwar*. Captain Fearon's record shows us that she sailed from London to Talcahuano in eighty-seven days, including a nineteen-day wrong-way rounding of the Horn; from Huasco to Newcastle in fifty-six days (a light weather passage, made mostly in the southeast trades); from Newcastle to Coquimbo in thirty-nine days; and from Iquique to Falmouth in a hundred and fourteen days. They were good passages, all of them.

In 1913, about a year after Captain Fearon left her, the *Grace Harwar* went to the Finns. Stenrus, in Helsingfors, was her first Finnish owner, and for him she continued to make good passages and turn in something of a profit. Following an excellent habit they have, the Finns did not change her old name nor cut down her rigging; the Italians, if they had bought her, would probably have made her into a barque, taken off her royals,

and called her the *Principessa Grandioso del Macarono* or something.

Again in 1916 we hear of the *Grace Harwar*, then twenty-seven years old, being mixed up in yet another series of collisions. On this second occasion she was lying in the river at Mobile, Alabama, preparatory to setting out for the River Plate, and on the other side lay the German four-masted barque *Frieda*, which had formerly been one of the *Craig Counties*, out of Glasgow. (I think she was the *County of Edinburgh*, built in 1885). A hurricane came and caught the two vessels there, tearing both from their heavy moorings. First the *Frieda* was swept right across and smashed into the *Grace Harwar*, making her unmanageable. Then the *Frieda* drifted ashore and the *Grace Harwar* was flung on top of her, and if the *Frieda* had not been there the *Grace Harwar* would certainly have been a total loss. As it was both vessels emerged from the hurricane in a sad mess, partially dismasted and otherwise seriously damaged. They were both refloated, however—the old Cape Horner dies hard —and sent to sea again. It was at that time, I think, that the *Grace Harwar* was brought to the little port of Mariehamn, the tiny Baltic haven which now can claim to be the last home of the great sailing ships. She was bought by Captain Gustaf Erikson, and in his fleet she has remained.

The *Grace Harwar* was at sea throughout the war, successfully coming through that catastrophe without falling a victim either to submarine or mine. True, for the most part she remained well out of European waters and so from the worst of the fray, but all the sea was

a danger zone then. She carried a cargo or two, at very high rates, from New York to Australia, and took a part in shifting more than one harvest of Australian grain. Those were the days when the square-rigger could earn high freights, if only she remained afloat to deliver the cargoes, and her sailormen had the time of their lives. I remember, not once but many times, fleets of big sailers lying up in Port Phillip Bay waiting for men, offering a cool hundred pounds for the run to Europe and sometimes more, and offering it in vain. There were not so many sailormen, and the steamers also wanted them. Who would go in sail? Those days went quickly, with the Armistice, and never, never returned.

Early in April, 1919, the *Grace Harwar*—she was still port-painted then—came into the port of Melbourne deep laden with general cargo from New York, and when that was discharged she took in grain. On May 20, in fine weather with a light westerly breeze to see her clear of Bass Straits, she put out to sea. From then until the middle of June she had the usual stormy weather, with a predominance of westerly gales and no other kind of weather save bad. It was winter in the far south, and the winter down there is very unkind. On June 22, close to Cape Horn, she met with exceptionally heavy weather —a three-day hurricane to which she could scarcely show a stitch—which did some heavy damage about her decks. The sea smashed the boat on the for'ard house, broke the glass of the starboard light tower on the foc'sle head —which didn't matter so very much because she wasn't showing any lights—smashed some of the hold ventilators, ripped off the tarpaulins from the fore hatch, and did

other damage. She came through that blow with nothing more serious, set some more sail and came on. The Horn was very bad that year—it is never docile in June—and she continued to make the heaviest weather of it. If she were not such a lovely old sea boat, she probably would not have come through at all. On June 29, the wind increased suddenly to hurricane force again, and an exceptionally severe squall blew out the fores'l and the mizzen lower tops'l, which there had not been time to get in, and at the same time threw the ship almost on her beam ends and held her down with her lee side about eight feet under water. All the main braces, which had been coiled down on the boat-skids out of the reach of the sea, were now swept outboard in long entangled streams of wet rope, which became jammed in the wash-ports so that they could not be hauled inboard again, nor got clear. This meant, if nothing could be done about it, that the ship was in a very bad fix. The yards could not be squared in. The fores'l and mizzen lower tops'l were left to blow themselves to pieces which they very quickly did, the few rags of other sails that were left soon afterwards following suit. The ship was now at the mercy of the seas which swept completely over her, still pressing her lee rail down feet beneath their foaming surface. It was impossible to get at the lee main braces to slack them out, and if the lee braces could not be slacked away the weather braces could not be hauled in. The sea was making a plaything of the main-deck and was distorting itself in huge grey-green mountains that were horrible to watch; the starboard door to the poop, which had been caulked down and built up with break-

waters to stand against a winter rounding of the Horn, was smashed in and the sea poured unchecked into the saloon. The foc'sle house was a maelstrom long since. In a few seconds the sea reduced the interior of the poop to a sodden wreck, destroying everything. The crew, all of whom had been summoned aft on the poop some hours before since that was the only place where they might have some chance of life, were now put to setting out oil bags on either bow to lay a trail of oil to break something of the power of the sea, and at the same time determined efforts were made to clear the jammed main braces. Eventually the main brace was cleared and led to the capstan on the poop; for the time being the sea had to be allowed to do what it would in the saloon to which it had broken a free entry. One chronometer, wet and rusted, was all that could be saved—charts, instruments, clothes, priceless old logs, everything was destroyed. It was touch and go for a time whether the sea did not break in through the lazarette hatch and so down into the hold, which would have been the end for everyone; heroic efforts and superhuman work by the sailors toiling up to their waists in the bitter coldness of the sea saved the ship from that danger. A little water penetrated to the hold, but not much. There also was a danger of the hatches going on the main deck, and then nothing would have helped. She would just sink like a stone.

Neither wind nor sea showed any sign of moderating, but by superhuman efforts the ship was hove-to under the main lower tops'l and left in the hands of God to ride out the storm. In the meantime the crew did what they

could to clear up the wreckage aft. It didn't matter about the foc'sle. There were no navigating instruments there, nothing but the crew's belongings and they were not of much value. Everything there was under water, and most of the sodden beds and sea bags had long since gone over the side. The saloon was a mass of floating wreckage. Bunks, clothes, gear, charts, furniture—all were entangled in one hopeless, sodden, ruinous mess. "All the ship's papers, charts, instruments, books, etc., etc. —everything—were totally destroyed, with the exception of one chronometer which was saved in the last moment, but wet," states the account of Captain Dommer in an "Extract of the Log of the Ship *Grace Harwar*, from Memory," a typescript copy of which is still in the ship. All other logs were lost, of course. The ship lay snug under the one lower tops'l, with everything else stripped from her yards; the oil broke the worst fury of the sea. All night the crew tried to get the water out of the saloon but not with much success; about midnight the wind and sea began to moderate a little, and by the next evening the water aft had been got under control. The partitions between the cabins had been all smashed and washed away; nothing but the deck and the poop above remained standing. The ship was in a mess on deck, too. Storm-ports had been torn out of her; the breakwater on the main hatch had been shifted but had held; the poop companion was gone over the side, and the hen-coop, the water-tanks, and a spare spar which had been lashed down on deck with heavy wires, had all shared the same fate; doors were smashed in; the stove in the galley had been shifted from its bed; capstans had been broken; the covers

from the two lifeboats had been torn off by the sea and washed away; nearly all the ship's lamps had gone, having been shifted from the lamp-locker by the break of the poop into the sail-locker "for safe keeping;" the glass in the cabin skylight was smashed in; every capstan bar in the ship had gone overboard; much of the running gear had been swept from its belaying pins in the pinrail and entangled into such a snarled and hopelessly twisted mess that it had to be cut away; there were ten inches of water in the hold and the pumps were broken. But the *Grace Harwar* still could sail!

This was in 57° 57′ South, 74° 54′ West—an inhospitable and tempestuous neighbourhood. Few ships go there from which distressed mariners may seek assistance; to add to her misfortunes all the signal flags from the locker in the saloon companion had gone, and it was discovered that the ship could not even make use of the time-honoured signal of distress, an inverted ensign. She had only her white and blue Finnish ensign—pretty new in those days—and whatever way that flag was bent, it looked the same. It could not be inverted. Whatever way you looked at it you saw a blue cross of St. George upon a field of white. Nobody, strangely enough, had thought of that before; in any case there was nothing down there to show signals of distress, had they been equipped with them.

The *Grace Harwar* felt her way past the Horn and tried to make for Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands. She actually picked up the land but was blown away by another gale, and then there was nothing else to do but to stand on and try to make Montevideo or Buenos

Aires. On July 22 she picked up the South American coast, and next day fell in with an Italian steamer to which an urgent appeal was directed for assistance—by megaphone, since there was no other means of communication. Sailing ships do not carry wireless.

Bad as her plight was, the captain of the *Grace Harwar* could still carry on and complete the voyage, if only he could secure a sextant, a reliable chronometer, and a chart of the Atlantic. Those were all his needs. The poop was a wreck, of course, and he and his officers would have to camp there in hammocks for the rest of the voyage. But they knew that the worst was past then, and, like the good sailormen that they were, did not want to put into any port save that to which they were bound. Putting into ports costs money, at any time, and putting in in that condition was going to cost an awful lot. Labour was expensive in South American ports, they knew; it would be much better if they could carry on and undertake the repairs in Europe. But the wretched Italian steamer had nothing to offer them save "one very old sextant and a chart for the entrance to the River Plate."

On July 26, 1919, the *Grace Harwar* arrived in distress at Montevideo, and it was not until some weeks afterwards that she was able to continue her voyage.

That, when we joined her at Wallaroo, was ten years before. In the intervening period she had been more or less profitably employed, and successive crews had left her, after round voyages, wondering if she were to set out on one voyage more. She always had; to Australia with timber from the Baltic, bringing on grain from Mel-

bourne and Geelong to the Channel for orders and discharging it at Belfast, at Bristol, at Swansea; rounding the Horn with coal for Mexillones and Valparaiso, and coming home again with nitrates and the produce of Peru; delivering a cargo of Canadian spruce to Buenos Aires once or twice, or Bristol Channel coal in Luderitz Bay. Nothing much had happened to her; she had weathered the usual gales, made the usual good and bad passages. Towing in the Kristiania Fjord once she was imprisoned there with her tug for two weeks, by ice, and her crew were starving before they were relieved. She lost her carpenter overboard on a voyage from Chile to the Channel in 1923—a simple enough accident that happens with murderous frequency in these low-sided, long, wallowing, heavily-sparred and undermanned steel sailing ships. The wonder is, however, that it does not occur with even greater frequency. The carpenter was a boy of twenty-one, signed carpenter because he was the handiest aboard with tools and not because of any previous experience in that capacity. The Finn is pretty often a born carpenter and no fool with any tools, for that matter. There was a tiny crew, as usual, and the carpenter stood his trick with the others at the wheel, having as his only privilege the right to eat his meals in the galley with the cook and to the acceptance of what few poor "delicacies" that gentleman could offer him—a bone out of the pea soup on Mondays, a potato, now and again, that was not wholly bad, and upon a great occasion once, the neck of a boiled fowl that had been drowned. . . . On this particular day the *Grace Harwar* was making up through the North Atlantic, somewhere between the Western Islands and

the Channel, with less than another thousand miles to go. It had been blowing hard the previous night and she was down to the lower tops'ls and the fores'l. The wind dropped a little with the sunrise, though the seas still came heavily on board. When he went to the wheel a boy was sent aloft to shake out the main upper tops'l, and the crew gave that sail to her, tramping it up by the lee main capstan. Seas still came aboard while they were doing this and they had to run for it once or twice, but there was nothing dangerous. The job done, the carpenter was relieved, and as he walked forward beneath the boat-skids and along to get his breakfast, she rolled her side into a sea and when she cleared herself again, he was gone. She was running heavily at the time, about nine knots; there could be no going back. It was known that he couldn't swim a stroke and he had been heavily clad; they were glad of that.

And so came 1925, with the ship putting out a cargo of Australian grain at Belfast. There she shipped a new master, new mates, and an entirely new crew; there Captain Gottfried Svensson joined her, the seaman who was still in command when we came aboard, and here, too, were shipped the first and second mates. From Belfast she towed round to Swansea, in South Wales, and loaded coal for Luderitz Bay, in South West Africa, reaching the African port after a passage of sixty-four days. There is still some work available for sailing ships to deliver coal at Luderitz Bay because they lie at anchorage and discharge it themselves, and the steamer will not spare the time for that long operation. To the sailer time is of little import, if she has a freight; her

crew costs her little, under the Finnish flag, and the most expensive item is the food. It is not customary to incur any big bills in that direction. They are manned by boys who are compelled by their country's law to serve in sail if they hope to be officers; and they are compelled by the man who owns these sailing ships to work for him for very little wages—a few pounds a month, when they have a little experience; often a few shillings only at the start . . . From Luderitz Bay she sailed in ballast to Barbados for orders, making the West Indian port in thirty days—that was good—and after a lay there of a month or two, moved on to Campbellton, New Brunswick, to load lumber for Buenos Aires. From Canada to Buenos Aires she was eighty-six days; thence she sailed in ballast to Port Lincoln in forty-five days, which was pretty good going. It was on this passage that Captain Svensson got the best from her she had to give; in a week she ran 1,877 miles, once making 312 in a day. In a month she ran 6,287 miles, which is further than from San Francisco to Sydney. On that passage from Luderitz to Barbados, by the way, she put up the excellent performance of sailing 1,462 miles in a week, by the wind the whole time. The logs which were still aboard showed that she had once made her landfall on the Victorian coast only eighty-three days out from her departure, Start Point. But she did not do anything like that for us . . .

From Port Lincoln the *Grace Harwar* was ordered to load wheat at Port Augusta, at the head of Spencer Gulf, in South Australia, for the Channel for orders. She sailed by way of Cape Horn and reached Queenstown, Ireland, some time in 1927, after a passage of 136 days.

She discharged the wheat in Cardiff, shipped a new crew, and set out in August, 1927, again coal-laden from Swansea for Luderitz Bay. At Swansea one of the coal trimmers fell down her hold and was killed. She set out with the same master and officers but with an almost entirely new crew, the only "old hand" being a South Australian boy of sixteen who had run away from home to join her in Port Augusta. The others were young Finnish boys, Swedish-speaking for the most part, from the Åland islands and the southern coastal districts of Finland. Their average age was about seventeen. Very few had seen a big sailing ship before, and none had sailed in one. One had been in a North Sea trader and in one steamer. There were twelve of them, altogether, and with the carpenter, sailmaker, cook, steward, two mates, and captain, the *Grace Harwar* had a crew of nineteen hands all told—none too many for a heavy full-rigged ship setting out on a very long voyage.

She arrived at Luderitz Bay after a passage of seventy-three days. A few days before she got in, on a calm evening, Captain Svensson was walking the poop—just taking a turn or two before going to his evening meal—when a lurch of the ship made him slip and he broke his leg.

At Luderitz there was talk of going on to Australia for grain, of going down to Cape Town to lift maize for the Channel for orders, of making across to the Chilean coast to load nitrates. None of these things materialised. The Australian wheat harvest was bad and the fleet of sailing ships chartered to help in the lifting of it was small; the steamers carried the Cape Town maize, and

the Chilean nitrate too. In the end, when the captain's leg had mended, the old ship set out in ballast for Ilo for orders in the hope that a charter would be fixed for her while she was at sea, to load guano at some Peruvian island for the United States or Europe—a rotten and wholly dislikable trade, but still a remunerative one, if she could get a charter, and one in which there was not much steam competition. She sailed for the coast of Peru by way of the south of Australia, rounding Good Hope far to the south and passing to the south'ard of Tasmania and New Zealand—a long lonely voyage during which the crew saw a good deal of ice, a lot of dirty weather, and little else. They arrived at Ilo after a passage of 104 days, during which they saw neither land nor the remotest sign of any other vessel. Here they learnt that a charter had been arranged for the ship to go to Guanape Island to load guano for Panama for orders, the intention being to deliver it either in Wilmington, North Carolina, or some port in Northern Europe. No one in the ship had ever participated in the loading of a guano cargo previously and they set out from Ilo, where they had no chance to go ashore, lightheartedly enough.

But they found that guano was hell. Guanape is a small rocky island protruding from a sea that would be enriched by its absence, in the proximity of the Line, not far from the coast of Peru. There is nothing there but guano and the birds which bring it; in the season, hordes of nondescript peons, indescribable half-castes, and dagoes whom no one on earth would ever want to describe, descend upon the place and add to its disadvantages. They clean up the guano—a service which

the birds appreciate—and put it in sacks. There is no anchorage and there is no harbour. The ships lie off, at anchor, prepared to stand hurriedly out to sea if the need arises. Nothing goes there save guano barques loading the foul stuff for delivery to the merchants of Peru, and an odd deep-waterman like the *Grace Harwar* in for a cargo for overseas. Their own crews, in the time-honoured manner, work the cargo in. It is delivered to the ship in bags which are swung aboard and slit over the main hatch, the reeking contents being allowed to descend into the bowels of the ship with a cloud of dust that arises to the tops'l yards and impregnates everything—the pea soup, the water, the uncomfortable bunks of the ill-ventilated forecastle. This guano dust is heavy with ammonia and hurts the eyes insufferably; it chokes the breath, and makes one's nose and ears bleed, if one has an unfortunate tendency that way; it turns all stomachs save those of iron, but as most sailors have iron guts (or they would never go to sea) that is a matter of lesser importance. It rots the ropes coiled on their belaying pins, and the sails aloft. It is dangerous to unbend these for there is no saying when they may be needed, in a very great hurry, to stand out to sea. The only thing to do is to let them be. Now and again the crew descend into the hold, with handkerchiefs saturated with vinegar bound round their mouths, and feverishly trim the guano into something like shape. When it has been trimmed it sets hard and is the very devil to get out again, but if it were left in the sacks it would rot them through and that would be hopeless.

At Guanape the youthful crew of the *Grace Harwar*

went through hell on earth. There was not one of them who was not violently ill, although strangely enough, the four-masted barque *Hougomont*, of the same company, was at the same time loading guano at Santa Rosalia, a little further south, and she had no trouble. The guano was bad, of course, and it was a distasteful job, but it did not kill anybody. However, an epidemic swept through the *Grace Harwar's* crew and the sailmaker, aged nineteen, died. He was a strong and manly boy of splendid physique, but nothing would save him. They buried him there, and expected daily that he would have company.

They were about two months—two fiendish months—at Guanape. Then the ship sailed for Panama and at Colon was ordered to discharge at Wilmington, in the United States. She towed through the Canal and reached Wilmington in September, 1928, after a six-weeks passage. Here the young Australian, having had rather more than enough of it, cleared out. Five of the Finns followed his example, and all the efforts of the authorities to trace them were unavailing.

In Wilmington some Americans were shipped, and the ship set out in ballast for Port Lincoln for orders. When she was 115 days[1] at sea, all the food supplies having long since been exhausted, she was lucky enough to fall in with the London-bound liner *Jervis Bay* to which she hastened to communicate the fact that her crew was hungry. The *Jervis Bay* steamed over to the becalmed sailing ship, which put out a boat and rowed across to her. The second mate was in charge and he briefly explained the position, while the liner's passengers and crew

[1] The 150 of one newspaper report was incorrect.

hung over her rails and gazed upon the sight. Food was hastily given to the mariners, and the passengers threw them down all the cigarettes they had; a case of apples and another of oranges went over the side, though the Finns had not asked for any delicacies. They asked simply for some tinned meat and potatoes, and a little flour, a little sugar, and a fresh vegetable or two if there were any to spare. The liner's people loaded their boat down to the gunwale and they set off with cheers.

"The exclamations of the Finns, as the food was given to them, were pathetic and the depth of their pleasure so apparent that the passengers could not help but be moved," states a newspaper account of the incident. "The crew of the boat were mere boys, one of whom tried smilingly to smoke two cigarettes at once while he also ate an apple. With their youthful officer in command they hastened to stow the many cases and sacks of foodstuffs that were lowered down to them, all the while grinning in great glee and making pathetic exclamations of joy in their own language. . . . When at last they had pulled away to return to their ship, the *Jervis Bay* steamed over the short intervening distance almost to within a few yards of the sailing ship, lying in the sunshine with all sails set and making a lovely picture, and blew encouraging blasts on her siren as she turned away and set off to continue her interrupted voyage. . . ."

A few days after that the *Grace Harwar* arrived at Port Lincoln, 117 days out from North Carolina, and there she received orders to load wheat at Wallaroo for the Channel for orders. In the early days of March, 1929, she arrived at Wallaroo, and there we joined

her . . . She was out then almost two years and had never been in a dry dock, simply because there had been no dry dock at any of the places she had visited. What was there at Luderitz Bay and Ilo? At Guanape and Wallaroo? These were outlandish places where little but the sailing ship would go; these were no great ports, with ship repair yards and dry-docking facilities. She had to lie two months in Luderitz Bay, gathering barnacles, and two months on the coast of Peru, gathering sea grass, and weeks in Wilmington, and sail twice around the world, fifty thousand miles, while the barnacles and the sea grass and the green moss gathered thicker on her sides and could not be removed. The salt water harbours of Peru and South West Africa were breeding grounds for the world's largest barnacles, and though those on her top sides could be scraped off, nothing could be done about those underneath. They had to stay, and they seriously affected the old ship's sailing qualities. . . . She was out two years, when we came aboard, and she'd had two cargoes. That can scarcely be the kind of voyage that pays, even though the ship may be run upon the utmost borderline of economy, starved of gear, short of canvas, of stores, and of crew.

We did not think of those things in the weeks at Wallaroo while we worked out the ballast and got her ready for the sea. We knew that she was the last Cape Horn full-rigger in the world, now that *Pinnas* had gone; there were other full-rigged ships (though very few), but none that tramped the world for cargoes and stood up against Cape Horn. Her old silver-grey hull was streaked with rust, and we could clearly see the barnacles clustered

thickly round her; we knew that she had to stop steamers, nearly every voyage in these later years and ask for provisions. We knew that she had a nasty habit, now and again, of killing some one of the adventurous spirits who manned her. But closely about her there still clings that old air of indescribable romance, that curious old call of red-blooded adventure; she had served man well, in a million miles of ocean wandering and a score-odd roundings of the Horn.

And now she was setting out on one battle more, and we would help her. Because we saw that she was going handicapped, that was no reason why we should leave her.

CHAPTER III

FELLOW ADVENTURERS

THE crew we shipped in the old *Grace Harwar* was as interesting as that old-timer herself, although they were all pretty young—most of them just boys. Pretty near all of the old crew had left either with the master's permission or without it; they had been aboard nineteen months and hadn't found, they said, much that was enjoyable about it. They hadn't been in one decent port, they said, nor made one decent passage. They had been short of food every section of the way—outside Luderitz, before Ilo, at Guanape, outside Panama, on the way to Wilmington, in the Australian Bight. They looked fat enough, though, especially the Americans who had most to say; but they one and all declared that there would be no —— Cape Horn for them in the adjectival *Grace Harwar*, or any other sulphurous and backbreaking old wind-jammer. As each of us newcomers came along they did all that was possible to dissuade us from joining. Nobody took any notice; largely because everybody had been in Cape Horn ships before, which the Americans hadn't, and a sailor's eye could see that the *Grace Harwar*, old as she was and then pretty dirty, was not nearly as bad as she was painted.

We were lucky to get a crew of experienced sailors in a place like Wallaroo, which would ordinarily appear about the most unlikely spot upon earth to get them.

But our crew consisted mostly of lads who had run away from other Finn ships and had found that Australia wasn't quite the land of flowing honey and so on it was supposed to be. Just then, indeed, things were bad there, with strikes and lock-outs numerous and jobs scarce; young sixteen-year-old Finila and eighteen-year-old Beckman, who had run from the *Herzogin Cecilie*, and Hägert, and Bergqvist from the little school ship *Favell*, were glad enough to feel the decks of a Cape Horner beneath their feet again, though God knows they had reasons enough not to be if they had thought of them.

In addition to Walker and me, two young Australians and a Londoner came aboard in Wallaroo. The young Australians were from Port Lincoln, the little South Australian wheat port which has seen so much of the last of the great sailing ships; each year a handful of adventurous Port Lincoln youths sets out in sailing ships, to take the places of Finns who have deserted, and now and then a few sneak back to work forever afterwards on the farm and to fire the imaginations of the stay-at-homes with yarns of blue-water days that are most carefully distorted and censored. And so the drift of adventurous youths continues; a surprising number of otherwise decidedly uninteresting youths who prop up shop verendah posts in Port Lincoln have felt the kick of a square-rigger's wheel on a long Cape Horn voyage, and done their share towards the handling of maddened canvas. But only once! For that is enough, always . . . Our youths were setting out for the adventure of their lives. They came aboard with huge bags of clothing, even huger appetites, and a cheerful outlook upon life in

general and full-rigged ships in particular that was afterwards pretty soundly taken from them.

"Hallo, you humps; we've come to join this ship," was the greeting of one of them to the assembled band in the foc'sle as they slung their bags into a bunk and sat down at the table; when by all the rules of the sea they should have crept silently into that low-sided sea-house of romance and sat respectfully in a corner until some old hand had flung a word in their direction—indirectly, of course. You used to have to be pretty circumspect about the way you joined a sailing ship, no matter how many you might have been in; and a greenhorn upon his first voyage! It would be months before his existence would be recognised, much less tolerated. Old shades of a hundred hoary sailors must have turned in the bunks of old *Grace Harwar* when our fresh-faced youths strolled in and said, "Hallo, you humps." And yet they were fine lads, both of them.

Jim was a different sort. He'd walked from Port Adelaide to Wallaroo—about 130 hot, dusty miles—because he had heard that the *Favell* was there loading wheat and he thought there might be a job or two in her. He didn't know she was a school ship and had no jobs, and he didn't know that *Grace Harwar* was at Wallaroo. He just packed up his bag and hit out from Adelaide when he heard about the *Favell* on chance, and was quite prepared to hit out for somewhere else when the *Favell's* Old Man told him that six of his boys had cleared out already but even if six more deserted there wouldn't be any jobs. She was only a thousand-ton barque, and she carried a double crew. So there was no hope there.

But Fate had blown the *Grace Harwar* also to Wallaroo, and better luck was in store here. Jim got a job on his first asking for one, on the full-rigger's poop; he'd been in a Finn sailing ship before, and in other ships besides. He had been a voyage in the big four-master *Olivebank* once, and had been knocking round a rather hard but never uninteresting world since he was fourteen —in steamers in the New Guinea trade, and around the South Sea Islands; ashore in Australia in all sorts of jobs, except good ones that lasted; portering in Covent Garden; trimming coal in a River Plate passenger liner; mixing soda drinks in the States and hard stuff in Aden. He was twenty-five when he shipped in the *Grace Harwar;* he estimated that he'd had at least a hundred jobs in Australia alone, and had had to work darned hard in all of them . . . The Lord knows why he had come back in sailing ships. There wasn't anything in the *Olivebank's* voyage to attract him back in them; a 60-day miserable run to the Horn and 151 days to Queenstown, a young boy killed in the rigging and another struck down by sickness, a too-small crew and a too-big ship, and always an infinite amount of indescribably severe and heavy work with nothing of pleasure in the doing of it. And yet it is always, somehow, the Trade Wind days that one remembers, and all the dull and dispiriting stuff betakes itself into the dim past—until, upon the Cape Horn road once more, it all rushes overwhelmingly back again and you swear, for perhaps the twentieth time, that by hell, you'll not come in sailing ships another voyage! Yet here was Jim, back again; here were Beckman and Finila, back again; here were Hägert and Bergqvist, setting out

for one voyage more. They had all given some blood for sailing ships, and suffered purgatory in North Atlantic misery and down-south gale. Beckman and Finila had come off narrowly with their lives from *Herzogin Cecilie's* ballast-shifting episode to the north of Scotland; Bergqvist had been in *Fennia* when she was dismasted off the Horn and suffered a six-months Good Hope voyage of wretchedness and exasperation in *Favell.* He had been landed into hospital with beri-beri from a sailing ship, and had staggered, in a battered and dismasted four-masted barque, into Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands as a refuge from Cape Horn . . . And yet here they all were, back again.

Bergqvist, Hägert, Finila and Beckman—all Swedish-speaking Finns without trace of Finnish blood in them (except Finila, whose father was Finnish and mother Swedish)—were all deserters. They had all been apprentices, Bergqvist and Beckman for two years or so, the others for one voyage, and they did not like being apprentices—not in their own country's ships, anyway. You had to work too hard, and you weren't taught anything, they said, and you had to do all the dirty work and take none of the pay. The disadvantage in a small school ship like the *Favell,* they pointed out, was that she had so big a crew that there was not sailors' work for all of them. Some had to content themselves with such uncongenial tasks as cleaning out the pigsty every morning and sweeping up the deck in the evenings after the captain's fowls had been loose all day, and cleaning up the poop after the captain's dog, and chipping rust, and scraping the decks, and washing the white paint, and

cleaning the brass—all hated duties. The work they wanted was something you could put a palm on for, or grab a marlinspike and feel like a sailor; something high in the rigging, in sunny weather, or in under the foc'sle head in a blow, with a serving mallet or a sail needle for companion. But these coveted tasks were allotted to older hands, second and third voyage apprentices, and the younger ones had to wait. And then in a ship of boys you could never really feel a man, anyway; you weren't one of a little band of half-starved stalwarts, up against it to bring the ship and her cargo safely to port. You were a brassbound boy whose people had paid the owner to train you, and if ever you prayed to heaven to be allowed to forget that fact, the mate never forgot it. True, too, there was a stricter discipline in training ships. You couldn't smoke in your watch on deck, nor slip into the foc'sle now and again through the night watches; and you couldn't grasp the wet spokes of the heavy wheel and feel that the ship was in your hands, and—for the time being—in your hands alone. The mate was always there, or someone of his underlings, and they did not allow it to be forgotten that they were in charge —very much in charge, even of your soul while you were at sea . . . Against the very big training ships, like the *Herzogin Cecilie*, was the fact that they carried usually so small a crew that you had almost to break your back to work them; the trouble wasn't that there was insufficient sailors' work to share round, but there was altogether too much. And it was a regrettable fact, these runaway apprentices said, that having a crew of boys only was too prone to breed despotism and tyranny in

mates. They held too undisputed sway. The boys had no appeal against them; they were powerless, and the mates knew it. The mates were sometimes very young themselves, in these school ships, and inclined to be swollen-headed. It was not unknown that now and again, probably in perfect justification, they should consider it necessary to kick a member or two of their youthful watches. Of course, with a good mate everything was splendid, except the backbreaking heavy work, and there were other reasons for desertion. Desertion did not mark, as landlubbers might understandably think it did, the weaker of the crew and those who were prepared to give in. It was much more prone to indicate the stoutest-hearted. It takes spirit to desert a ship, in a strange land. These Finnish boys are compelled by their Government to serve their time in sail, and to qualify for an officer's certificate they have also to spend a long period ashore, in a navigation school, learning the theoretical portion of their studies which they cannot possibly find time to master at sea; they have, for example, to be able to speak and write Swedish, Finnish, German, and English fluently, and that is but a minor requirement. These things cannot be done in a day, nor can they support themselves through this long period ashore without money. They cannot earn the necessary funds in their ships, since they are not paid anything. Their relatives have already been put to the fairly considerable expense of paying the premium necessary to secure them their places in the training ships and of buying their outfits; it would not be fair to expect further indefinite help from them. The only hope left is to clear out from the ships and work

ashore in Australia for a year or two, where wages are high and work usually not difficult to find, and then ship back again in sail once more and return to Finland with funds enough to spend the time at school and qualify as an officer. Not very much is needed, in English money—£40 or so is ample. But that is a lot in Finnish marks.

Our runaways were unfortunate. They took the bold step of deserting, and then discovered that they were worse off than ever. Work was not to be had. Hägert and Bergqvist, who were each about nineteen, tramped hundreds of miles into the interior of South Australia seeking something to do on a farm, but all they found was one wretched berth on a farm run by a German, who did not consider himself called upon to pay them anything. When they asked for wages he said he would take them back to the ship, and they ran away from him at that base threat and tramped about once more. It was no good. The wheat season had largely passed, and there was no work. In the end they were driven in despair back to Wallaroo, first having paid a fruitless visit to the waterfront of Port Adelaide, and waiting until their own little *Favell* had sailed, they applied aboard the *Grace Harwar* for berths as ordinary seamen which were promptly given them.

Beckman was seventeen, and Finila fifteen when he came to us. Beckman was an apprentice in the *Herzogin Cecilie* when I was there, in 1928, on the voyage when the young woman stowaway turned up out of the after-hold. He had been in the ship six months when I came aboard. Finila was much newer to the sea, and had joined the

big white four-master only in Mariehamn before she set out that voyage. He was six months in her, and that was enough for him. The *Herzogin Cecilie*, still under Captain Reuben de Cloux, sailed out in ballast from Mariehamn to Port Lincoln, and on the way her ballast shifted and she very nearly went to the bottom. It was to the north of Scotland, the first week at sea. Head winds at the entrance of the English Channel forced Captain de Cloux to put up his helm and run for the north of Scotland, hoping to make out into the North Atlantic that way since he could reach those open waters by no other, but the ship encountered a series of fierce gales in the far north which drove her from her course and seriously delayed her. In the midst of a heavy squall on one of these days of gloomy gale, without the slightest warning her ballast shifted and rolled down to leeward, hurling the ship precipitately over on her side. For the second everyone thought that the end had come, but she stayed there, and did not go right over. Her t'gall'nt yardarms were skimming the seas; all her sails were blown out (which was a good thing really); her boats were gone overboard, her lee rail was smashed and swept away, and she was in a very serious mess generally. For a moment or two nobody tried to do anything because they did not think there was anything they could do, except pretty quickly die; but they saw that the ship hung at her dangerous angle, and they set-to to clear a way into the hold and trim the ballast right again, and straighten the old ship and bend some more sail, and come on. The seas were sweeping right over the main deck, and the scene generally was one of indescribable confusion, not in the

least conducive to cool action. The hatches could not be opened, lest the sea pour in; there was a way into the hold through a dark lazarette hatch aft, and down this all hands descended, captain, cook, carpenter, mates and everybody. It was pitch dark, and above they could hear the ceaseless frightening crashes of the giant seas sweeping aboard and the screaming of the furious wind; they knew only too well that at any moment their ship might take a mad lurch, and never rise again. There could be no escape, if that happened. For they would be trapped like rats, and drowned like rats, without the slightest hope even that anyone would ever know how they died. It looked rather much as if they would be drowned, in any case, for they had no boats after the ship fell on her side; it was better to die doing something. It was better to wait for death, trying something, if it only occupied one's mind. They worked until they had no minds, and went on. They worked until they could not stand, and still continued. They worked until they felt that they could remember no previous existence upon this hell on earth when they had not been madly toiling. They worked without food, rest, sleep, interruption of any kind. They worked because they would die if they did not, and probably would die in any case, even if they did. One of the boys had been flung against the bulwarks when the ship first lurched, and his left arm was broken. He worked, too; nobody set his arm. The blood congealed on it, and it hung from his shoulder unset and unattended. It must have caused him screaming pain, but he did not appear to notice it; it was three days before he fainted,

and by then the ballast was well on the way to proper stowage once again.

The difficulty was that as they tried to shovel the ballast back into the weather side, the working of the ship, coupled with the precarious unnatural angle at which she was lying, promptly spilled it back again to where it had previously been, and they had to build up a barricade of heavy planks before they could do anything. They worked for four days and four nights, on end, down the hold the whole time; the gale did not abate but waxed angrier; the last vestige of canvas had long since been torn from the yards. . . . But in the end they won, and they straightened their big ship up again, and sewed more sails and bent them, and sheeted them home and sailed on.

Such was Finila's sea baptism. He didn't look a child of fifteen, when he came aboard the *Grace Harwar*. He looked eighteen or so, at least; when he left he looked years older than that. All his clothes were in the *Herzogin Cecilie*, left there when he ran away. So were Beckman's. They ran away in Port Lincoln, at the end of 1928, when their ship was loading wheat in Port Lincoln at the end of the voyage which she began so inauspiciously, and they had to leave all their clothes because there was nothing else they could do. They had to hide for a while, and then to make off across country as fast as they could go; they had some vague idea of walking to Melbourne, about eight hundred miles away, and since they had no money to pay for fares they could not carry many clothes with them. They had, when they slipped ashore from the ship, exactly nineteen shillings between them. They went

to the "pictures" in Port Lincoln on this large sum and bought chocolates with what remained of it. These they ate; then they set off across Australia. They could speak no English. They had never been in Australia before. They had no work, and knew that there was not much chance of getting any. They had no food, and they had no money. They set off across an arid and waterless little settled area to walk around Spencer Gulf, from Port Lincoln to Port Adelaide, nearly four hundred miles away by the way they had to go. They had to walk through some of the worst country on the Australian seaboard, in the height of a hot summer. They had no water with them, and no means of carrying any; they were unused to walking. They did not even know that they should have had water . . . And yet they arrived at Port Adelaide, after nearly three weeks, two weeks of which were occupied in reaching Port Augusta, at the head of Spencer Gulf. From there they were given lifts in motor trucks, and rode in trains when the guards weren't looking. But how they got to Port Augusta I don't know; I could never induce them, throughout the long voyage, to talk about that section of their experiences. Their feet were in blisters and their shoes in tatters before they reached their objective; they had been without food for days and suffered badly from thirst. The first English that young Finila learnt was "Please, missis, 'ave you somet'ing to eat," but being able to say that was of little use on the trek to Port Augusta because on most of the way there was no "missis" or anybody else to be seen.

In Port Adelaide they were utterly worn out with walk-

ing. They had failed in all endeavours to obtain work; there was no work to be had. They did not yet dare to think themselves far enough away from the ship but they were too worn out to continue their walk. They stowed away in a big coastal passenger steamer, with the connivance of a Scandinavian member of the crew, and, hidden down in her hold among the cases and bales, travelled foodless and fareless to Melbourne. They slipped ashore in the night when no one was looking, and got something to eat aboard the Finnish four-masted barque *Archibald Russell*, which happened to be moored not far away. Finila said afterwards that he became a connoisseur of the fare of ships' foc'sles, so many did they board in their quest for food. The sailors always helped them, and they were never turned down.

But work there was not. They did not wish to go back to sea. They had had their fill of *that*, in sailing ships. They would have gone in steam, round the Australian coast, gladly; but there were no jobs. There were no jobs anywhere. They set out on the trek again and left the waterfront behind them, convinced of its uselessness; this time they headed for New South Wales. Passing through a Victorian country town an inquisitive and not overworked constable stopped them, having heard that there were runaways at large from another Finnish sailing ship which was then at Geelong.

"Hey, youse boys, just come 'ere and tell me something," demanded the officious personage. "We don't want the likes of youse goin' round the country setting bush fires."

The unfortunate youths were not aware even what a

bush fire was and had no food to cook, and therefore no need to start a fire; luckily for them the Australian "missises" were without exception good to them, and their calls upon the farmers' wives were never in vain. They stared on the man in blue in dismay, and felt the misery of the prison bars rise around them. What could they do? They didn't know even enough English to be aware that the deserters the policeman sought were not from their ship; they thought that they were lost utterly. They followed the constable to the police station in deep gloom, wondering why they were not handcuffed; an amused and faintly interested populace looked on with smiles. But it was no smiling matter to the two young ex-apprentices.

They were held at the station for two days, and allowed to go only when it was proved beyond doubt that they were not from the ship in Geelong. By that time their own ship had gone and they could not be returned to her. They were glad . . . The experience was not without its better side, however, for the policeman's wife was moved by the youth and innocence of her husband's captives and looked after them royally, while they were in gaol. And then when they were turned out again a local resident gave them a job, cleaning up the last of the harvest. They were paid twelve shillings a day; but they had to earn it! The work was too much, in their weakened state. They were not as old as they looked, by any means, and they did not look grown men. They stuck to the harvesting, but it was finished inside two weeks and they had to take the trail again. Their friend offered to keep them

on, but there was no work, and they would not stay if there was not something for them to do.

Their next job was cutting ferns and clearing off a ghastly mess of tangled undergrowth from a huge area of virgin land belonging to an Italian gentleman, who at the end of two weeks of heavy labour informed them that he expected them to be glad to work for their food only, and a rough shelter of bags which he gave them in a shed. They went on, sadly.

There were no more jobs. They reached the border of New South Wales, and after a while of it, turned back in despair for the sea again. Harvesting was over; there were plenty of Australians without work, and there was little chance for them. They walked back once more to Melbourne, being helped by motorists on the way. Beckman had now collected a frying pan and Finila was an expert at catching rabbits; they did not need so often to knock upon the farmhouse doors. They went foodless often, and they slept in the rain; it was a hard life.

In Melbourne their presence became known to the consul and awkward questions followed; they got clear of that and looked desperately for a ship to get back to the sea. They found that they could get no ship without their papers to prove previous experience; these they had left behind in the *Herzogin Cecilie* at Port Lincoln, and with the poor hope that the captain had left their belongings with the shipping master there, they set off undaunted on the trek towards Port Lincoln again. They rode on trains, on motor trucks, and with kind-hearted motorists through the length of the state of Victoria and on through South Australia; they reached Adelaide in

less than a week, but the section which remained—across to Port Lincoln—was by far the worse. There was nothing for it but to stow away again, in a steamer going there, and this they did—in a lifeboat on this occasion. Again they sneaked ashore in the night when nobody was looking; but the ghastly tidings awaited them that nothing of their belongings had been left ashore. Neither was there the slightest prospect of work in Port Lincoln.

They were now in a desperate position, with the winter rapidly approaching. There were still two Finnish sailing ships in Australia—the four-masted barque *Ponape* in Melbourne, and the *Grace Harwar* at Wallaroo. They swung their frying pan and the few rags they had collected on their backs, and set off for Wallaroo, intending if there were no jobs in the *Grace Harwar* to carry on for Melbourne. They reached Wallaroo, and there were jobs. They came aboard the ship late one night and fell upon a meal of boiled meat and potatoes; it was the first solid meal they had had for weeks, and they listened to the tidings that the ship was bound round the Horn in the depth of winter to the Channel for orders scupper-deep with grain, undismayed. They knew what that would mean! They had neither bedding nor clothes. They were without oilskins and seaboots, so vitally necessary to the support of life running the easting down. They were weakened from their long privations. Beckman didn't smile, much! I noticed a striking difference from the happy boy I had known in the *Herzogin Cecilie*, not a year before. His pale face was grave, and set, and worried; his blue eyes looked out seriously upon a troubled world; his mouth was drawn a bit and the flesh had fallen

from his once chubby cheeks. He spoke quietly, as he always had, yet now with the quietness of one who had suffered a good deal, of one who didn't expect much happiness from life, of one who had prematurely and quickly become very old. Finila smiled when he had eaten his fill, and cheerfully chose a bunk in the low foc'sle that he thought would have the greatest chance of missing the greatest number of seas when the water began to wash in there on the road to Cape Horn. But his fair face was now unnaturally fairer, and the white skin seemed stretched tightly over it. . . . They were driven back to sea, these children, driven back to a sea which had used them hard.

The ship lay weeks at Wallaroo, while we took in grain, and then sailed out to ballast grounds and dumped the ballast, and sailed into the long jetty again when the wind was fair, and began to take in the cargo properly for the long voyage. Work! Nobody knows what work really is until he has shipped in a sailing ship; everything was done by the strength of our arms, and everything that could went against us. We hove the ship in alongside the quay against a southerly gale, having dropped anchor a little way off when we were sailing in because it blew too fresh to go straight alongside. There was no towboat to help us. There was nothing at all.

Other members of the crew came aboard, a young Frenchman, who had shipped in the Britisher *Garthpool* in Belfast and had left her in Port Adelaide; a sailmaker named Blomqvist, who had been nearly two years in the four-master *Hougomont*. There were still three young Finnish boys who had begun the round voyage in Swan-

sea, and these stayed with us. Sjölund, Sjöberg and Holmberg were their names, and they were all strong and willing boys, with time enough aboard the ship to have developed into splendid sailors. Sjöberg in particular was a capable and wholly likable character; he was nineteen and looked thirty. Sjölund was younger and looked as old. Holmberg had been in a little Finnish barque called the *Zaritza* on a voyage that she ended in distress in the North Atlantic; there was no pleasure in that, and little that one could see that would entice him back in sail again. Yet here he was, still aboard the *Grace Harwar* after her eventful wanderings, staying on for the worst section of a long round voyage none of which had been very pleasant. He was very young, too—eighteen, I think.

That about gave us a full crew—not a full crew really, by any means, but all that would be coming with us to sea. There were the three old-timers—Sjöberg, Sjölund, and Holmberg—the two Australians, Jim the Londoner, Pierre Berthoud the Frenchman from the *Garthpool*, Beckman and Finila from the *Herzogin Cecilie*, Hägert and Bergqvist from *Favell*, and Walker and I from Tasmania. That made thirteen all told, to work the *Grace Harwar* watch and watch round the Horn that voyage. It wasn't many . . . Then there was Blomqvist the sailmaker, and Mansnerus the carpenter, who also had joined the ship in Swansea nearly two years before and had already qualified for his second mate's certificate; the cook's name was Lindqvist, and since his younger brother had been cook of the *Herzogin Cecilie* I looked forward to establishing friendly relations during the voyage—a

matter of importance in the ship of sails! Cook Lindqvist was the steward as well; he was aided by a Finn named Korhonen who looked after the officers aft and had been more to sea than any of the other foremast Scandinavians. Then there was Captain Svensson, himself quite young though he had been in command over five years and had twenty years' experience at sea behind him. He was thirty-three; he had gone to sea from the age of ten, sprung of a seafaring family. He had joined the *Grace Harwar* four years before, as had both his mates. They were all sailing ship men and excellent officers. The chief mate was twenty-eight and the second mate twenty-seven; neither they nor their captain had ever been in steam. Nor had the sailmaker, nor the carpenter, nor the cook, nor most of the boy-sailors . . . There we were, twenty hands all told, thirteen before the mast. There were others who wished to come, but they were not shipped; sending a crew across to the ship in Swansea two years before the owner had sent twelve boys. Now we had thirteen, and probably in his view that was one too many. We certainly could not take any more, although there may have been a crying need for them and to go to sea as we were may have been little short of criminal. Yet it was not strange. It was just ordinary; we were, indeed, better manned with our thirteen boys than the huge *Herzogin Cecilie* was, the previous year, with nineteen. With all hands out we would at least have one good watch on deck; with all hands out in the bigger ship, there were times when we still could not manage her. . . .

So the wheat came aboard, and the stevedores sang as they trimmed it. The ship sank daily lower in the water;

we painted her round (where she was showing the rust only, for there was not enough paint for all), and set the rigging right, and bent the sails that had been taken down for repairs, and set aloft a new backstay or two and some new running gear. We took aboard our sea stores, and noticed that there did not appear to be too much of them. We got to know each other a little and to feel the run of the ship; we hardened up our muscles and straightened up our backs for the voyage. The night before we put to sea, lying out at an anchorage off Wallaroo, a nigger came aboard who was to make the passage with us, but not as one of the crew. He had been cook of another Finnish sailer, the barque *Penang*, and deserted her in Wallaroo some months earlier; being a prohibited immigrant in Australia he was arrested before he got very far and put into gaol. The *Penang* had gone then, and when the next of the company's ships came along he had either to be shipped off in her or the owner would have to pay a pretty heavy fine. He was a boy of about eighteen, from somewhere in the West Indies; he had been, strangely enough, only in Finnish sailing ships and spoke fluent Swedish—better Swedish than English, for that matter.

When this curious Swedish-speaking nigger was safe aboard and the hatches were all caulked and recaulked and well battened down, and big breakwaters of stout planks and heavy chains erected on them, and all the running gear and the sails in as good trim as we could put them, we weighed our anchor and stood down Spencer Gulf with a light fair wind out to sea.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST WEEKS

"WHAT do you do when you want to get some sail in an' it's raining?" one of the young South Australians asked the older hands one sunny day in Wallaroo, and wondered why they laughed. He learned, the first night at sea; he learned! We stood out into a nasty blow, the first night, and it ripped some of the sails from her; it blew half a gale from the west'ard, and we had to shorten her down.

We weighed anchor before a light northerly breeze which took us right down the length of Spencer Gulf and clear of the western end of Kangaroo Island, with bright sunshine and pleasant conditions. Ships have been held weeks in Spencer Gulf trying to beat out to sea, to get out to seaward of Kangaroo Island; the previous year in the *Herzogin Cecilie* we had encountered head winds and had to run round the island and make out to sea through the narrow passage at the eastern end. The four-masted barque *Olivebank* was once three weeks getting from Port Lincoln out to sea. Both she and the *Hougomont*, which loaded at Port Lincoln, were held up for days and days by head winds, after they had loaded, and spent nearly a fortnight at anchorage and beating about before they finally got to sea this year; they were loaded about March 20 but it was April 4 before they were clear of the land —both off together, from the same port, to the same port,

with the same cargo. It looked like being an interesting race between them, though the *Olivebank* had never had the name of beating much.

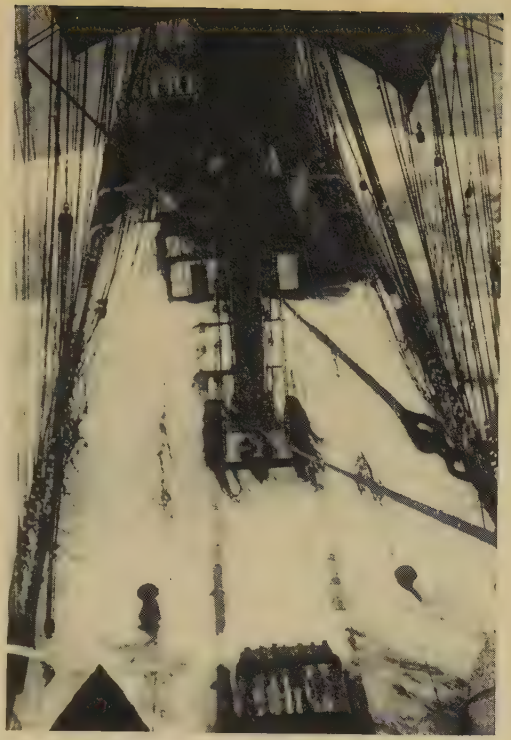
We suffered no delay, and encountered no head winds. We stood straight out into a blow, but it was fair wind, and once we had the old ship shortened down she revelled in it. It was fine to feel the heave of the sea again! Although it was very cold, away from the land, and there was a shriek in the strong wind that whipped up the sea and sent the sprays driving heavily across our decks; although we early had a taste of the difficulties that were to follow, because of our short-handedness. In the evening the ship rose and fell gracefully to the caress of the seas, bowing to their majesty ere she set out on her months' long fight with them, while they lapped around her grey old sides, and kissed her in a kind of cold welcome; and as the wind freshened and the night came, fumed and hissed and roared around the sweet cutwater, and swept along angrily astern, where the deep bottom had cleft them. They broke grudgingly before the figurehead and leapt with wild exultation over the foc'sle head, and across the fore deck; when the ship rolled, with her steady old gracefulness, they skimmed closely along her t'gallant rail and spilled a little of themselves aboard, on occasion, not as if they really meant to yet, but just to let us know what we might expect from them afterwards. The main deck was wet upon the first night, nor was it dry for months afterwards.

With the night it began to rain, and although it had not freshened much there was a plaintiveness in the wind where it sang about the rigging screws that hinted of

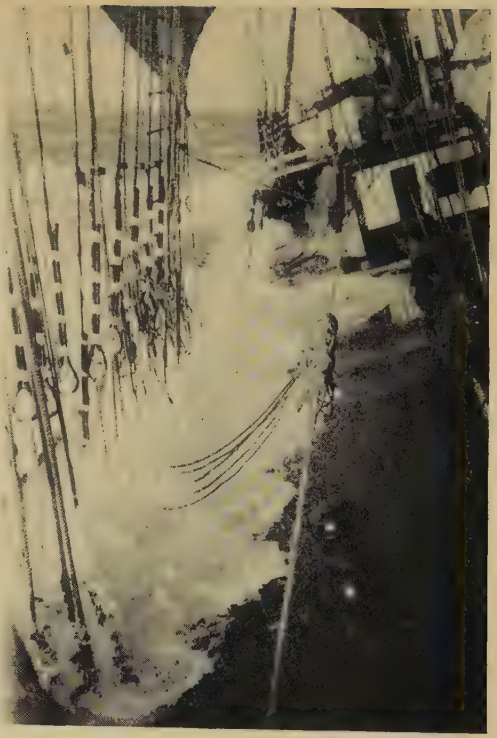
power, and perhaps a little of vindictiveness as well; aloft it was roaring through the backstays and the running rigging with a noise like the beating of a giant airplane's propellers. We had unbent the fore and mizzen royals before we went to sea and the main royal had not been set, and no flying jib had been bent to grace the fore t'gallant stay, so that we had no rags of kites to get in at the wind's first freshening. The *Grace Harwar* had got long beyond t'gallant stays'l days, if ever she carried them, and we had no kites. It was just as well. We had as much as we could handle, with her bare necessities.

In the first night watch—from seven to midnight—we took in the outer jib and the crojack, which both came in easily enough despite the fact that they were wet. Then we began to clew up the mizzen t'gallant, but while we were at this the wind came down at almost gale force. The mizzen t'gallant was in ribbons instantly, flapping madly high aloft; the main upper t'gallant and the fore lower t'gallant went almost immediately afterwards. The rain fell heavily and descended upon the sea with a loud hissing noise; the roar of the wind was stronger than ever, but above it could be heard the mad booming of the blown-out canvas; the ship lay over heavily, and pressed her lee rail into the sea which boiled around her. The youthful figure at the wheel was having as much as he could do to hold her. The wind was from south of west, and he could not let her run too much before it. We could see the light of Cape Borda blinking watchfully now and then through the pall of rain and rack of storm-cloud.

We had all hands out instantly, and lay into the rig-



ON THE WAY TO CAPE HORN



IN BETTER WEATHER, SAILING IN A LEE SEA

ging to save what we might of the blown-out sails. The ship was lurching wildly and contorting herself in a bewildering manner to the newcomers to the sea; there was something terrifying in the noise of the storm and the grim fighting of the ship. And yet high aloft on the yards it was more exhilarating than anything else, though the wind stripped one's inefficient oilskins from one's back and the rain beat down ceaselessly upon undefended shoulders and soaked through everything. The lashing about of the canvas strips from the torn sails did not add to the pleasure of trying to make them fast; away beneath, the dim form of the ship could be made out, with white shadows falling across the decks now and again that were heavy seas; looking aft the phosphorescence of the wake shone out eerily, and the dim light from the binnacle was reflected queerly in the gleaming oilskins of the figure at the wheel. Ahead stretched nothing but the blackness of the sea-wastes, extending from there to beyond Cape Horn; in the stygian gloom the white phosphorescent heads of great running seas rose ominously, and their roar as they fell upon our decks rose above the shrieking and howling of the wind. It was a grand first night! These were the conditions that we had to meet; this was the kind of thing that we could expect indefinitely, until we came past Cape Horn, and it was just as well to begin with it and not with softening and deceitful sunny weather. We must get the bad sooner or later, and plenty of it; it was just as well to begin, and then we knew exactly where we were. There was little of good weather or of kind skies to be expected from the Cape Horn road at any time, and it was now rapidly coming

on winter; it was as well to forget such things as sunshine and happy warmth from the beginning, and not to think of them until the South Atlantic came, months later, and we crossed the Tropic of Capricorn and came into the Trade Winds. In the meantime we wanted the west winds, and here they were, welcoming us in their wild manner. We had chosen the Cape Horn road because they blow down there, these wild west winds, and they hurry the wind ship on along her stormy way to better latitudes. Not for her any seeking of land-girt tropic canals, which shorten the steamer's voyage from Australia by thousands of miles! Not for her any soft pursuit of good weather and mild routes, for the benefit of pampered passengers! For her there is no consideration save winds; she is not concerned with the distances she may sail, but with the winds she meets. She does not seek good weather, but bad; she does not look for peaceful days, but stormy ones, for these help her on. She calls at no ports, and makes no deviations. She has no aim save to reach her destination. She has no work, save the safe delivery of her cargo. With this end nothing can matter, even if it be the lives of some of her crew . . . To the sailer setting out from Australian ports with her hold filled with golden grain bound to the English Channel for her orders, there is no road save the Cape Horn road, in winter time. She stands straight out to sea and heads southeast, to clear Tasmania and reach the strong winds belt, and then she drives across that stormy, ice-infested stretch of thousands upon thousands of miles of bitter ocean, and does not incline one shade to the north, until Cape Horn is past and she may

feel before her all the freedom of both Atlantics. True, in summer time, sometimes a sailing ship, setting out from Port Lincoln or Wallaroo, Port Augusta or Port Adelaide, may stand westwards along the Australian coast and then cross the Indian Ocean, in the tail of the south-east trades there, and sneak around Good Hope the wrong way with the Agulhas current. But it is apt to be a long voyage, that way; and in winter it is often impossible. There can be just as bad weather off Good Hope as off the Horn, and, setting out from midway between the two, it is better to run east with the weather for the Horn than to beat westwards against it for Good Hope . . .

The wind freshened, and we took the lower t'gallants in, and after them the mains'l, and after them the mizzen upper tops'l. And so the dawn came, with the ship under storm canvas, and we turned her head eastwards and to the south to run southwards of Tasmania on the road to Cape Horn.

The days passed, and the weather showed no alteration. We saw nothing of other ships, nor of anything save the giant seas that raced with us and the albatrosses that skimmed them. It did not often cease from raining, and then only for half an hour or so at a time. Constantly there was the swirling of the grey seas across the main deck; the deckhead of the foc'sle leaked, and all the bunks were wet; the lee door was jammed and the weather door would not shut properly. The cook had locked himself in his galley with both lee and weather doors shut securely, and opened the upper lee door a little only at meal times to pass out some pea soup and

boiled salt horse and potatoes boiled in their jackets. This was our standard dinner, which we ate ravenously in the middle of the day; for breakfast we had coffee and sometimes porridge, or very rancid bacon and very strong beans; for the evening meal we suffered any concoction that the cook put before us. The nigger from the *Penang* took to the galley, in this miserable weather, and did not often get up from the 'thwartship bench in there; he helped the cook a little somewhat infrequently, and talked garrulously all day although he had nothing to talk about. He had been two and a half months in Australia, and spent most of it in gaol; yet he knew more about the troubles of that Commonwealth than its Prime Minister, and was better informed of its needs, and talked more about them than all its newspapers. He was not abashed one jot by his experiences behind the bars; he gave us lurid and endless details of life in gaol, and seemed to remember with most bitterness that another nigger, suffering similar detention, had complained to the chief warder of his mouth organ playing and had it stopped. He criticised the cooking in Australian gaols, and said that he could do much better. After a while, he began to express similar sentiments with regard to the galley of the *Grace Harwar* . . . His mouth organ, unfortunately, was the nearest approach to a musical instrument the ship possessed. Bergqvist was a violinist but his violin had been sold in Australia to buy food; Beckman was a pianist but he might as well have been able to play the grand organ in a ship that did not even possess a jew's-harp—not that we thought much of music in those early days. We were too much concerned with getting

down to the life, with getting our sea legs again, and resigning ourselves to the four or five months of the coming voyage.

The first week out is a bitter experience, with nothing much of romance about it. Somehow the voyage seems a ghastly business, then, and the sea ahead appears interminable. You realise the full significance of the task before you—to be blown by the wind from Australia to England! To be subject to every puff of wind and every squall that blows, through four months or more, over fifteen thousand miles of ocean! To have to work by the strength of your hand a full-rigged ship, dependent upon her sails alone for her motion, round Cape Horn to England! It *is* something, when you get first out to sea, and think about it; it *means* something, when the land has slipped into the obscurity of the haze astern and will not emerge again from the haze ahead for four months or so—and perhaps never. The two young Australians were seasick, and could not get over it. One was called Roy and the other answered to the name of Alf; the Scandinavian chief mate, with commendable good taste, refused to accept the name of Alf for bawling round the decks of a sailing ship, holding that it did not fit in with its surroundings, that the monosyllabic clownishness of the name jarred upon the ears, heard in the music of the wind and the sea; and he forthwith and despite all protests rechristened Alf "Rolf" while he was in the *Grace Harwar*. Rolf sounded much better, but poor Alf never could understand why he was not given his "proper moniker."

With the passing of the days we settled down to the

hard work and the round of watch and watch of the voyage. The watches were chosen the first night out, with six in one and seven in the other. Both Walker and I were with the second mate's watch, with Sjölund, Bergqvist, French Peter, Roy, and young Finila for fellow sufferers; the mate had Alf under his care, with Sjöberg, Holmberg (called Filimon, though that was not his name), Beckman, Hägert, and old Jim. Jim became "Yim" in Scandinavian, but the others retained their respective cognomens. The carpenter was attached also to the mate's watch, and Blomqvist the sailmaker to ours. Neither of these petty officers was required to take a turn at the wheel, that honour being left to us foc'sle dwellers; the style of the Cape Horner always is that the petty officers stand watch and watch in bad weather, and work all day and have all night in, in good. No one slept all night in the *Grace Harwar*. The cook and the mess-boy aft were allowed to rest from about nine at night until four in the morning, in consideration of which latitude they had to be prepared to work pretty hard for all the rest of their hours. We stood hour turns at the wheel each, as is the Finnish style, and worked on deck fourteen hours one day and ten the next. With so small a watch—with one at the wheel and one on lookout, there were only five left to haul on the braces or take in sail—we had to have all hands out whenever there was anything doing.

So the days passed, and it continued to blow and to rain; and nothing else happened. The wind was steadily from the west, but it was constantly fluctuating slightly in direction, making it necessary very frequently to haul

the yards round a little to trim the sails better. The wind does not often blow for more than a few hours from one direction without a slight fluctuation; it is a most inconstant factor, even where its general direction is most constant. A schooner, with her fore-and-aft gaff and boom sails, may adjust herself more or less to the different fluctuations and be content so long as the general direction remains unchanged. It is not so with the square-rigger. There can be few fluctuations so slight that they do not have to be countered by a trimming of her many yards, and we were made unfortunately aware of this fact before we had got very far on the voyage. We were ceaselessly at the braces, and the wet, stiff ropes were hard on the hands. The constant hauling on wet ropes and straining with wet, wind-stiffened canvas, is very hard on the hands and makes them cruelly sore, whether one has come from office deck or pick and shovel. All our hands were quickly in the same condition, freshest greenhand and oldest shellback. Deep, bloodless cuts and splits in the flesh appeared in the palms and along some of our fingers, and remained malignantly there even if one tried to do something about them. They never healed, and never made any change, except sometimes to be more painful. Our wrists, from the constant frapping of the frayed oilskin stuff bound closely around them, became red-raw and exquisitely painful; our oilskins quickly became sodden and useless. It was impossible to secure good oilskins in a place like Wallaroo, and the best oilskins in the world would crack up in a Cape Horn voyage. We could only buy rubber sea boots, too, when leather would have been infinitely preferable. Leather

sea boots are heavier aloft, of course, but that slight disadvantage is much more than counter-balanced by the fact that they are infinitely warmer. Rubber sea boots are clammy, and nastily cold. If they keep out the sea water their own clamminess makes one's feet horribly wet and soggy, and they cannot be dried—not in a full-rigged ship anyway, with no heating system, little shelter away from the hutch-like foc'sle, and no warmth of any kind away from the galley. The sea poured into the galley, too, upon occasion; in any case the galley fire was out at nights and the galley locked up, because there was neither too much food aboard to cook, nor too much coal to make fires to cook it. There was insufficient oil for the sidelights, and we soon sailed without. What did it matter? We sailed along the route of no ship, save other sailing ships like ours; and they were far ahead and bound in the same direction. We could meet nothing, save ice, and sidelights would not help in its detection. Nothing would; we had so small a crew that frequently, when there was bracing to do or sails to handle by night, there was no lookout. The ship pitched on blindly in her helmsman's hands, lightless and unwatched, while the mate slacked away at the lee braces and the watch hauled in a weather, or the second mate slacked away on the t'gallant halliards and his watch, while the others slept, hauled with all their strength on buntline and clewline and afterwards laid into the rigging. No one was careless; we did what we could. There were always four on deck, at the very least—the helmsman, the lookout tramping the foc'sle head, the policeman (whose duty it was to be at the beck of the officer of

the watch, tramping the poop, but who really came in more useful for summoning the others out on deck when occasion demanded their hasty presence), and the officer himself, mate or second mate as the watches changed. But when there was work to do everyone was in it, save the helmsman; the wheel could never be deserted. She was a good little ship to steer, by the way, and answered her helm well and never demanded, except when she was running very heavily, much of it. But we could have done with as many apprentices as we had in our whole crew. I wonder how many hands the old ship carried, when she sailed under the Red Ensign with "London" on her counter?

Six days out we passed to the south of Tasmania. That was not bad going. Until then we had had no head wind. All winds were fair, from some point west, and all we did was to run along buoyantly before them, making nine knots mostly when the old ship would have run ten or eleven, if she had been clean. We could not spread much sail but that did not matter. She would go just as well with little as with a lot, and make better weather of it. We unbent the sails that were torn the first night out, and did what we could to repair them. There was no spare mizzen t'gallants'l and for weeks there was no sail on this yard; neither was there a spare main upper t'gallant fit to stand in that weather, but we were able to repair the sail that had been blown out and send it aloft again. It is heavy and dangerous work, bending and unbending sail in that weather; when we were not required to work out on the exposed main deck or in the rigging we were allowed to stand by in under the

foc'sle head, making buntline block mats and chafing gear of different kinds, while the carpenter, in his watch on deck, made new blocks in his tiny shop and the sailmaker, in his watch, sewed diligently at his sails—an intricate and skilled job in which the youthful skipper frequently joined him. The carpenter was a good carpenter and the sailmaker was a good sailmaker, and the mates were good mates and the skipper was a good skipper. We got to know each other better now that the restraining and unnatural influence of the land was gone. The different nationalities got along well together, and we all settled down to our jobs. The hard weather of the first few days drew out the best in everybody; we had a good crew. The two young Australians were still sick when we passed Tasmania, white-faced and drawn by then and pretty fed-up with it all; this was not what they bargained for! They learnt now how bitterly and devastatingly different is the sea one imagines, gazing fondly upon a square-rigger beside some quay, given over to admiration of her beauty and to the call of adventure that shrieks from her, from the sea that besets the same old windjammer when she is free of the land, going somewhere! There is no greater and more horrible trial upon earth than constant seasickness, in the foc'sle of a sailing ship. You get no sympathy. There is none to give you. While you are laid up, every member of the watch —small enough at any time, God knows—must stand your trick at the wheel, and pull with your weight on the braces, as well as their own, and tear with your arms at the billowing sails, as well as their own already overstrained ones. There is no lessening in the amount of

work, because there is a lessening in the number of hands to do it. It may be all very well to be seasick in a passenger ship—though there it is bad enough—and sneak off to a warm bunk with no fear of a cold sea or two pouring in to keep you company, and stewards to bring you tea and the reassuring news that the ship is making her steady 320 and will soon be in better weather. There can be no talk of better weather in the Cape Horner! If there is any change it will be for the worse. It is as much as you can do to lie in your bunk, when the ship is doing her best to toss you out of it. It requires great effort to lift your head; when you turn out at eight bells, you feel as if you would like the ship to go down with the utmost possible rapidity; if you had the energy, you would stumble to the side and fling yourself over, without waiting for all hands to accompany you. Seasickness is a horrible thing about which no one can do anything save fight it. It cannot be overcome in a sailing ship. You have to stumble about the miserable decks, often up to your waist in seas that knock you down, and drag upon sodden ropes, and mount high into the sickening, swaying murderous rigging; you have to hang grimly to the spokes of the wheel, and tramp forlornly on the exposed lookout with the sprays driving constantly over you; you have to follow the watch about, and speedily do the mate's bidding. The mate makes no allowance for seasickness. He has been seasick himself, and he knows that the worst thing he can do is allow you to give in to it. You've got to fight it; fight it until you wish it killed you, and then summon up the will to fight it some more. You sway into the rigging and struggle out along

the reeling yards, drunkenly clutching now and again to the jackstay for support, careless at times whether you pitch blindly off into the sea boiling below, and yet somehow always carrying on . . . The days pass, and you are no better. You remember vaguely the days when you were not seasick. My God, that was paradise! And then one watch you go on deck, and the dizziness and the sickness have all gone.

Roy and Alf were badly seasick. They were the most seasick youths, poor devils, that I ever saw. They were not over it for three weeks, though they did their best to fight it, and time and time again, sunken-cheeked and haggard, crawled by the supremest effort out on the cheerless deck, and strove with every ounce of will they had to carry on. The flesh on their faces sunk almost wholly away, leaving the white skin stretched upon the bones; they were weak, and wet through, and foodless, and sick of life. Yet they carried on, and crawled to the wheel when they could, and swung into the rigging with the rest of us. Life must have been a hell on earth to them, those days. If only the ship might meet a spell of good weather, only for a day! they cried; but of course she did not. There was no good weather to be met, down there. We never saw the sun, and it rarely ceased from raining.

During the whole of the six days on the way to Tasmania, we were running, slipping steadily along. At nights it was exhilarating to walk the reeling foc'sle head as she rolled, choosing ones beat carefully in order not to be flung over the side as she staggered, and to look aft at the great seas racing there, towering huge above the

little ship that always rose to them, and always sailed on. Sea after sea raced ceaselessly out of the night down upon her, roaring before the anger of the gale, and swept upon her counter and fumed around her, and leapt up at her weather side and, now and again, tossed hundreds of tons of themselves into the wet misery of the main deck; some of the seas were so big, and the ship seemed to be driven on so furiously, that it seemed that nothing could save her from being pooped by them, and swept helplessly fore and aft, as she had been upon that previous occasion off the pitch of the Horn. Yet she always rose, and she always ran on. No sea was too big for her, and no cross-maelstrom they could devise so treacherous that she could not run sweetly through it. Sometimes she shipped seas heavily, and if it were not for the life-lines it would be suicide to go on the main deck—yet we always had to work there—but she always rose after every sea, and hurried on. Standing on the look-out there one found oneself looking more aft at the splendour of the spectacle there, than ahead for the lights there were not. Surely the sailing ship is one of the most beautiful things man ever created, and one from which he has had most faithful service. One could not remove from one's mind, watching there, the idea that the ship had some knowledge of what she was required to do, and was doing it; persistently there returned the notion that more than her sweetness of line, her strength, her gracefulness and old sea-beauty, were needed to bring her safely through. The weather was not so bad; it could have been very much worse. But she had been doing this, encountering these conditions (and infinitely worse),

and serving man as well in them, for forty years. Beautiful and game old ship! There is little man has made that approaches anything in Nature, but the sailing ship does. There is not much that man has made that calls to all the best in him, afterwards; but the sailing ship does. There is little that man has done, these modern years of rush and nerve-rack—when beauty is sacrificed to Epstein hideousness and art to the monstrosity of the daubers, when books are churned out as soullessly as the presses that print them and the theatre is given up to bawling shadows—there is little that man has made to inspire future generations, and carry on the loveliness and sweetness of glorious and efficient beauty. The sailing ship does these things; old, and battered, and sea-worn, and a little unsafe too, if one is frank about it, as the old *Grace Harwar* was that voyage, there was an inspiring loveliness and a grand pursuit of difficult and dangerous duty about her, and loyal devotion, and steadfast noble carrying-on through all obstacles and despite all difficulties that lifted one completely from the misery of the sodden gale and compensated a millionfold for whatever hardships there may have been associated with it. "This is the life!" said little Beckman, rubbing his chilled hands together on the fore tops'l yard. "I'm glad I'm here!" said Ronald Walker, though his oilskins were sodden and his bunk washed out, and he had never had to work hard before and the reality of the life at sea down there was something of a shock to him after all that he had read about it and all he had imagined. He was glad he came, although it hurt abominably.

And then came head wind, and freshened gales, from

south and south-east now, with nothing of west in their direction. We were not long past Tasmania when the west winds basely deserted us, for no reason; and without any abatement in the strength of the wind, its direction suddenly changed completely. We had been looking forward to a fast run to the Horn, to compensate us for the added misery of winter, and did not mind how hard the wind blew or what we had to suffer so long as it was fair. And now it was coming from ahead! A day or two would not matter much, although it was worrying; three days passed with no improvement; four days, and the wind showed not the slightest tendency to return back to the west. Five days and no change; six days and it was blowing a hurricane from the south. And cold! There was no shelter at the wheel, and that was the worst hell; we could get neither dry nor warm. There was now constant sleet to add to the discomforts, and the sea where it swept aboard turned the iron stays and the steel rails to ice. There was ice in the footropes—just a trace of it—and the sails, when they had to be taken in, were doubly stiff with the frozen sleet, and trebly difficult to handle now that the wind had gone ahead. We did not, fortunately, have to handle them much; it blew too hard to hold much sail, though we held the full mains'l as long as we could to keep her head into it and allow her to make a better course. We were then in about 45 South latitude, making across the Tasman Sea to pass to the south'ard of New Zealand and make across to Cape Horn. The only land between us and the Horn was New Zealand; and now it looked as if we would not be able to weather that. We would have preferred, since the deep-

water sailing ship likes always to give the land the widest berth possible, to pass right away to the south of Campbell Island, clear of everything; but with the wind from the south'ard we could not go in that direction. The nearest approach we could make to our course was to steer about east by north, headed somewhere towards Stewart Island. As the days passed the conditions became worse—much worse; the ship headed now towards Milford Sound, upon the west coast of New Zealand, and if the wind did not haul further round, she could do no better. Southerly wind would not have been so bad after we had cleared New Zealand, but before we were upon the eastern side of that Dominion's lovely islands the south wind was no help to us at all.

The ship was braced up sharp on the starboard tack, under the fores'l and the three lower tops'ls, with a rag or two of stays'ls to keep her head up and help the steering; she wasn't sailing much, under those conditions. She was virtually hove-to, waiting for a let up in the wind. No let up came. We wore her round once or twice and stood on the other tack down towards the entrance of the Ross Sea in the Antarctic, but, as we did not have to deliver our three thousand tons of wheat to the penguins in those frigid regions, that was not much use. The wind hauled to south-east at gale force, and stayed there. South-east was the very direction in which we wished to sail, and with the wind *from* there we could make no progress . . . We held on blindly, on the same hopeless thrash; the ship drifted more northwards than towards the east, and daily lost instead of gained. The sea was raging high and furious with the constant heavy wind,

and swept across our decks continuously; the watch was knocked sprawling once, wearing her round, and swept about the decks as if they had been made of matchwood. Bruised, sodden, soaked through and through, tired, dispirited, bitterly cold and chilled to the very bone, the boys picked themselves out of the water again and went back to the braces, and smiled.

"I'm that flamin' wet an' soaked through inside an' out again," said Jim, "that I suspect me skin ain't waterproof no more!" And then he grinned, and when the job was done, removed his rubber sea boots and poured the sea out of them, and philosophically drew the clammy rubber coverings on again, over wet socks and everything.

Nobody had good oilskins, and everybody suffered. There was never the slightest trace of sun and never the remotest chance of getting warm. We would not have minded that, if only we had been running on and coming nearer to Cape Horn. We knew the world could hold no pleasure for us, until we passed that bitter headland; we asked only of the wind that it should hurry us there, and not keep us dallying on the way. . . . Upon the thirteenth day at sea the sea raged about us fearfully, and the heavy seas that swept aboard began to damage things, and the outlook was ugly. We hove her to, to ride it out as best she might, but a great grey sea sweeping aboard knocked the hencoop from its place of security beneath the boatskids aft and swept it along the length of the main deck. When it was rescued three of the fowls had been drowned, and the others were so wet through and bedraggled that the cook had to take them in the

galley and put them on a shelf in there for a week to dry. Nor did they forget the wretchedness of that experience for the rest of the long voyage.

The same sea, finishing its mad career beneath the foc'sle head, drowned the biggest of our three pigs in there—a big fat porker that we had been looking forward to eating. The other two were miserable little things, bought in Wallaroo, and these also would have died had they not been stowed in the bos'n's locker for security . . . The sea also smashed in a ventilator or two, lifted a boat from its chocks, shifted the spare spars on the after deck, filled up the foc'sle, and washed a tarpaulin from the fore hatch. Moreover, there were numerous similar seas only too anxious to follow its example and wreak more damage.

There was no slightest indication of any intention on the part of the wind to haul back to the west'ard. Captain Svensson, at last despairing of weathering New Zealand, understandably fed up with the long thrash against the gale, put up the helm and squared in the yards. We steered to the north to pass through Cook Straits, between the north and south islands of New Zealand.

CHAPTER V

"ALL WELL"

THE wind, which had been unfavourable on the course to pass southward of New Zealand, held fair enough on our new course, and on the morning of the sixteenth day at sea we picked up the haze of the south island of New Zealand, away on the starboard bow. The wind dropped at that and we were able to give her all sail, for the first time since leaving Wallaroo; slowly we came up with the land, slipping now gently along through the quiet seas. The sun came out and actually had something of warmth in it; parts of the main deck were dry, and we fetched out the blown-out mizzen t'gallants'l from the first night's gale and spread it on the poop to dry. By midnight the wind had died away completely and we lay there in stagnation, with the sails banging and slatting back against the masts and the lee rigging as the ship sluggishly rolled and wallowed in the long, lazily panting ground swell that came faintly out to us.

The next day there was no wind, nor the next. Then there was a slight breeze coming right out of Cook Straits, instead of blowing towards that narrow passage; we could do nothing but put the ship close-hauled to it, on the starboard tack, and stand across the stretch of water that separates the western extremity of the south island from the north island; one morning we had a

glorious view of the loveliness of Mount Egmont, raising its conical snow-capped head out of the morning seas in welcome to the sun. The clouds lightly stooped to kiss the softness of this breast rising from the waters, the sun looked down in golden melody, and all the world seemed fair and welcoming, round that far southern, beautiful land. We stood on until the coastline skimmed the horizon, a dark irregular line of beetling land, and went about again and stood upon the other tack until we left Mount Egmont out of sight and picked up the shores of the other island; we went round again once more towards Mount Egmont. We beat about there like that for several days. The dawns were glorious and Mount Egmont a sight for the gods; but we made no progress on our voyage, nor could we, while the wind remained in that quarter. We were about to put the helm up once again and stand along the western shore of the north island and sweep right around the whole length of New Zealand, fetching at last into the South Pacific by way of the Three Kings of evil reputation—it would have been a long way out of our course to go up there—when at last, quite unexpectedly, the wind hauled round to the west and we were able to stand on our course and sail through the straits. This was on the twenty-first day out, May 8, 1929; upon the evening of that day we slipped past Wellington Heads, at the entrance to the city of Wellington, capital of New Zealand. Rain had come, then, and visibility was bad; we took some sail off her while the wind freshened, and she ran on a steady nine knots with little sea. Just at nightfall we were in a bit of a predicament once when a thick pall of rain came suddenly down

blotting out all view of the land and everything, just as we were coming to the most dangerous part of the straits, the narrowing entrance leading past Wellington Heads to the open sea beyond. At the same moment the compass took it upon itself to go mad, and instead of indicating faithfully and faultlessly the direction in which the ship was heading, swung about in all directions and was quite useless. Before the rain came down we picked up a precipitous island, just a shade off the starboard bow; we stood on now feeling our way carefully to pass that dangerous rock, uncertain where it was, unable to say exactly in which direction we were heading. With the compass useless and the land blotted out, we steered on only by the wind, keeping the ship exactly before it as she had been previously, listening intently through the murk for the swish-swish of the seas on the cliff base that would warn us we were running on the island. It had no beach to set up the roar of breakers; the sea gurgled around its slippery, smooth sides with an evil softness, giving us little warning of the proximity of the rock. If we had run there it would have been a sudden end! We should have foundered, right in sight of the land, a score-odd miles from a city, with our long voyage scarcely begun. . . . The captain stood by the teak rail at the break of the poop, a motionless but unperturbed figure, coatless but not heeding the rain, staring into the murk ahead, and now and again turning back to feel the direction of the wind. He showed no impatience, no alarm, no perturbation. He gazed into the darkness impassively, and now and again signalled to the helmsman with his arm to give her a little this way or that. We ran into a clear

patch, after a while, to find the light of the island blinking right abeam, not three hundred yards away . . .

The night was clear when we passed by Wellington and we saw the lights of the Heads distinctly, with the haze of the city lights behind. We looked upon the scene from the main yard, where all hands were making fast a wet and fighting mains'l, and thought of these thousands of people among those lights on our beam, who were going to dances and cinemas and restaurants and bed and so on, happily content to pass their days in peace and gaiety, with us rushing on into the night out there, in our little full-rigged ship, standing on towards Cape Horn. . . . The captain signalled the station on the Heads with an old electric torch that he had, and flashed across the waters the tidings of what ship it was, and that we were "All well." The lights of Wellington were the last we saw for many a long day, and that was the last occasion on which we could send that message . . .

For three days after clearing Cook Straits the west wind held and we ran on well, hoping since we had suffered so much delay at the start, that we might run on quickly now and come around the Horn. We did not want to dally on that road. With the ship so dirty we did not expect to reach the English Channel in less than four months after leaving Wallaroo—maybe more than that, perhaps five—but if we were seriously delayed on the road to Cape Horn the chances were that we should be 167 days, or more than that. Four months is time enough to spend at sea, without a call at port or seeing anything; we did not wish for more. Now we were twenty-three days to the 180th meridian, and Cape Horn

A DECK VIEW, FROM THE BOWSPRIT

LOOKING ALONG THE LEE SIDE FROM THE POOP

was four thousand miles and more from there. We crossed the 180th on Friday, May 10; we had two Fridays, May 10, both of which we reckoned as the twenty-third day out. The sailing ship runs east round the world all the time, catching up with the sun; by the time she has run from the meridian of Greenwich to the 180th meridian she has gained twelve hours on the sun, and she has to give herself an extra day in order that when she comes up to the Channel again her dates will not be a day out, for then she will have picked up a whole twenty-four hours. It sounds a curious anomaly on the face of it, but the explanation simply is that the sun rises four minutes earlier for her with every degree of easting she sails, so that by the time she has sailed right round the world—and the sailers in the Australian trade sail around the world every voyage—the sun is rising a full twenty-four hours earlier for her. That is a whole day, and if she would pick up the thread of the humdrum world again, she has to give herself an extra day at some time during the voyage. It makes no difference where she may do that, but the crossing of the 180th has been traditionally chosen. The only circumstances in which master mariners have been known not to adhere to that rule is when their ships have come over that magic line upon a Sunday, and the granting of two Sundays in the week would give their crew two holidays. They could not stand for that!

We did not do so badly, although we had to suffer two Fridays, and the week was, in consequence, insufferably long. We were given the second Friday as a holiday, upon which we lazed about the decks and did some washing, required only to keep our watches and stand our

turns at the wheel—two each a day—and look to the trimming of the sails and the yards when it was necessary. There was a patch of sun upon occasion, and one could read on the fore deck, well muffled up to keep out the cold and entrenched somewhere where the wind could not penetrate.

After that the west winds died away and left us, nor did they return again. We had all kinds of weather, except the strong west winds that we wanted. Upon May 13—twenty-six days out—I see that my log records that we suffered "an ideal combination of extremely unideal circumstances, consisting of a high beam sea, a soft afterly wind, and little way, the result being that she's rolling like blazes and it's a job to sit down—and even to sleep! But the weather is fine. . . . For how long? Everybody wants to get past Cape Horn." Upon the next day, the same conditions; on the next "the wind hauling all over the place, in the course of the twenty-four hours working round from N. through the various stages of NNW., NW., WNW., W., WSW., SW., SSW., to S., so that we have been by the wind on both tacks and have made little progress. The sea is big and the ship labours heavily, shipping green seas over both rails at times. We have her down to the six tops'ls, fores'l, and mains'l—in the process of shortening, the other watch handled the mizzen t'gallants'l. From six to eight we got the two fore and the two main t'gallants in, and the crojack—not bad for a watch of six. Blomqvist is dayman now, since there is so much sail-sewing to be done, and that has weakened us considerably. It has been raining heavily all day and our oilskins are like sodden tissue

paper; it is pretty cold and the wind aloft has a ghoulish yowl in it. Walker and I manhandled both fore t'gallants in the streaming rain and biting wind—a job it was, too, with a deficiency of gaskets and the yards too close together. We were wet through utterly to the skin, oilskins, sea boots and all, and our hands were blue with the cold. You can't wear gloves! They'd be wet through, anyway, and freeze on you . . . The conditions were such, surely, as to induce a powerful feeling of unalloyed misery, and yet we feel a queer kind of exultation in it all. Why? God knows: I don't. It *is* an extraordinary game, this wind ship business. Heaven knows whether the film to which we give up our watches below will be successful—it is a big thing!—but at least I shall have had one voyage more in a Cape Horn sailing ship, and that is something. And Walk will have copy for the rest of his life. . . . There has been plenty of wretched heartbreaking work all day, with the sleet and rain driving ceaselessly down and the howl of the wind. We hope a strong westerly will come of it all and give us a push towards Cape Horn . . . Poor Finila has no oilskins at all and the unfortunate kid might be pardoned if he gave himself up wholly to a state of wretchedness; but he smiles."

On the twenty-ninth day: "The wind is south'ard with maddening cold from the frigid hell of Antarctica, but we go course; it is not strong but there is a Cape Horn howl in it when she rolls to wind'ard. The boys are taking a pessimistic view of the voyage, looking forward gloomily to a seven-weeks run to the Horn at the very least. Somebody has counted up that we have thirteen in our

crew—fateful number. We see few albatrosses, and those that we have noticed have been strangely dark, almost black. The ship, they point out, has lost her figurehead, and that is bad. . . . There was a guessing competition to forecast the number of days of the voyage; Finila said 200, Beckman 150, Bergqvist 159. Walker is the most optimistic with 108; French Peter is next with 125. No one else has exhibited the slightest optimism . . ."

The thirtieth day: "The weather is continually promising us a good westerly wind—a true Cape Horn breeze—and then going back on itself at the last moment. To-day we have had sleet squalls and sunshine, flying spume and slatting sails, heavy rolling and speeds varying from nine knots to four. The tops of some seas lop aboard, and now and then some real ones." And then better luck the next day: "Real Cape Horn weather at last! Or something like it; she is filling the main-deck to the pin-rails and racing on in a big sea before a freshening SW. wind that whips along a hail squall now and again. Before six bells in the afternoon watch she was down to five tops'ls (mizzen upper in) and the fores'l and mains'l. The main upper t'gall'nts'l split and we had to send it down in a sleet squall, first all getting thoroughly wet through around the main rigging clewing it up— What a life! But Walk has discovered that he likes it—and so I suppose, do I. It has a curious fascination, but getting wet through isn't part of it. It is very cold and everybody's oilskins are quite useless . . . At eight bells in our afternoon watch below—these things always happen in our watch below—with the wind piping up and the main-deck full—what a roar there is in the rigging and

smashing of seas!—all hands on deck get her down to three lower tops'ls, main upper tops'l, and fores'l, real Cape Horn canvas. The kids turned out well as they always do, and we got the canvas off her with the sunset, afterwards splicing the main brace. This is something like what we came for . . . At 7 P.M. all hands out again to stretch the fore tops'l, the wind inclined to steady down a little. She is rolling very heavily and the shock of the seas breaking aboard makes her shudder continuously. Captain says that we are five days worse now than on *Grace Harwar's* last Spencer Gulf-Cape Horn run, when she was thirty-seven days from departure to the Horn. When shall we come now? It is a long, long way from here. I do not like to look at the charts, there is such a depressing width of waters between the faint pencilled cross that indicates our position and the bold outline of the Horn . . . This life twists your soul sometimes in misery, and sometimes lifts it wildly in splendid exultation. If we fail with all else in England—and that is not impossible—I can at least come back to the sea again." On the next day, May 19: "The wind has lightened again and we have given her back most of her sails. Gone is the strong and snoring breeze and we sneak quietly along; the sea is still big and there is a constant wash of cold and foaming waters across the maindeck. It is very cold now, most bitterly so at the wheel in the night watches. This morning from four to five it was almost insufferable, and one felt like biting off the spokes of the wheel and leaping, screaming, over the side . . . We have run down only twenty-three degrees of longitude this week, which is not Cape Horn going."

And so the voyage progresses, day after day, week after week. Sometimes there is better weather, sometimes worse. The log is eloquent of the ups and downs of the voyage. "Monday, May 20, thirty-three days," we read: "The sun has shone and there has been warmth in it! But it would not dry clothes . . . Indeed the West Winds are kind to *Grace Harwar*, though they do not very swiftly blow her on. Thirty-three days out in the *Herzogin Cecilie* last year, we were off the Horn; here the second mate says we shall be fifty days, at least. I do not think it will be quite that much, and in any case it is always wrong to estimate the length of a sailing ship's voyage by her ill-luck on any part of it—or her good . . . To-day has been grand with a good westerly breeze to which she runs eight knots under every stitch bent, and if it were not so cold we might almost expect to see flying fish around. But it begins to darken before four o'clock and the afternoons are dark and heavy, the nights cold and long. . . . I have finished the sewing of a Cape Horn jacket of No. 1 canvas, oiled and tarred, which is to go beneath my oilskins." And the next day, May 21: "The westerly is light and variable again to-day, and we do not make the progress that we should; I suppose we run about five knots, under all sail. There is still a good deal of water about the maindeck, some of it with a kick in it. It is remarkably easy to be swept off one's feet by the water that comes over a sailing ship's side, even when it isn't much at all. That is why sailors leap out of the way of it, if they can, not because they are afraid of being wet. Mostly they are well wet al-

ready . . . It is breezing up a little better in the first night watch."

May is a summer month in the northern hemisphere, of course, but there is nothing summery about it down south. It is cold and bitter, with biting winds sneaking up from the ice wastes of the Antarctic, and deathly winter gathering his forces around for his assault upon the more temperate climes of the Argentine, South Africa, and Australia. Here upon this lonely waste of waters that contorts itself and fumes between New Zealand and the Horn, bounded to the south only by the ice and stretching northwards interminably, the gales, the squalls, the hurricanes, the miserable onslaughts of wintry ferocity are mobilised to be tried out before they are trained upon a hemisphere; here the tyrant wind whips along his ill-mannered brutish squalls and his snarling storms, his foul sleet and cutting hail. This is their training ground; may God help who wanders here! Nothing comes save the sailing ship and the albatross. The albatross was nurtured here, and thrives upon a diet of hurricane and snow. Against the sailing ship all the fury of the assembled forces is let loose, and bitterly the gale carries on its fight to drive her beneath the furious seas. Sometimes it wins, and snarls and howls in ferocious triumph. And if it loses, someone may have paid the cost . . .

"It is grey and dull, and very cold, with plenty of water on deck and sprays driving halfway up the shrouds," reads the entry for May 22. "Now the nights come gloomily, and the days: there is neither sunset nor dawn, and no one can say when the light is ended or

when it has begun. There is a long and gloomy change from dull skies, lying heavily upon the greyness of the sea, into duller night, rain-sodden, fog-filled, cold. It is dark before 4 P.M. and not light again until 9 next morning. Without cessation an ugly, clammy, misty, penetrating rain fills the low vaulted murk of the sky, and the only change is when a sleet-squall comes. The wheel is hell utterly . . . When shall we come to Cape Horn?"

Yes, when? When, when, when, by God? . . . "It takes guts, this game, by hell it does!" wrote Walker in his log, one of these days. It was all new to him, and he did not understand how, if once one ship had been that way and one crew had suffered, another ever had the courage to go and another crew set out to face the miseries, the discomforts, and the perils.

And yet our little crew was happy enough; if we made no grand progress and lost a lot of time, we could have been worse off. The wind could have been stronger. We could have had worse fights with the sails. Indeed, they appeared to be more tractable than usual. The tops'ls of the *Grace Harwar* were small compared with the *Hergozin Cecilie's* and comparatively easy to handle. The mizzen upper tops'l was a babe that the watch could handle, when we became accustomed to it. The crojack was just a rag and we never set the royals. The longest that we were, until then, making fast any sail, was little more than two hours. That was not bad when we might have been two days. We had not once, until then, had to spend the whole of any night on deck; we had lost hours and hours out of our watches below, of course, and now and again a whole one. But it could have been

much worse. There was a fine spirit amongst the boys; Hägert, who had come aboard dispirited and morose from his experiences in Australia, had now developed into one of the brightest spirits aboard. He sang when he was called at midnight to arise from his shelf-like bunk and emerge into the cold hell of the world again—our world—and bellowed his sailors' songs as he dragged on extra trousers over those in which he had slept, and dragged on torn and tattered guernseys, and wrapped his feet in sacking preparatory to inserting them in clammy rubber sea boots. He sang! That took some doing . . . He was once known to mutter the air of a melody at the changing of the watches at 4 A.M. Beckman, small Finila, Bergqvist—all these without oilskins and with leaky sea boots—were cheerful though there was nothing to be cheerful about; Jim recalled that they had had to suffer much greater trials in the *Olivebank*, the voyage when young Tyler fell out of the rigging and was killed. Finila had no blankets, Beckman no guernsey, Hägert no socks, Walker no sou'wester (it had been blown overboard long since), Jim almost no clothes. Yet they were cheerful enough, these grand spirits, and did not hang around morosely, cursing their fates. Finila said it was better than being on the beach in Australia; Beckman laughed at the sails of the small *Grace Harwar*, after the giantess *Herzogin Cecilie*. . . .

So we came to May 25, the thirty-eighth day at sea. The port watch were on deck from midnight to 4 A.M. that fateful day; we came on deck at 4 A.M., bitterest of all hours at sea. The previous day had been wretchedly stormy, with the wind from the south-east, of all direc-

tions; we had been beating aimlessly, advancing not one inch towards Cape Horn, called upon to suffer all the torments of hell. The ship was shortened down to the tops'ls and the fores'l, since the wind was at gale-strength and there was no use in driving her into the dead head wind. Through the whole of the miserable day the direction of the wind did not change one jot; boy succeeded boy at the soaked, windswept wheel, each passing the ship over to his successor with a muttered injunction, between chattering teeth, to "fer 'ell's sake bring her up a bit an' let her go course"—a prayer that was not answered when midnight came, and it was our turn to go below to snatch a little sleep in our wet bunks until a quarter to four in the morning. That was all the sleep we were to have that night—from midnight until a quarter to four in the morning. And even then we could not sleep for the bitterness of the cold and the impossibility of inducing the remotest fraction of warmth to enter into bodies from which all semblance of warmth and circulation had long since been driven. We huddled together on a dry spot on the foc'sle floor, along the bulkhead which divided that apartment from the galley, in the hopes that some remnant of heat from the cook's poor fire might still be clinging there to be absorbed into our bodies—a vain, vain hope, indeed. The fire was drawn immediately the evening meal was finished, and not lit again until half an hour before coffee in the morning.

It was with some degree of satisfaction that, having dragged our frozen and stupefied bodies out on deck to muster before the mate promptly at eight bells, we noticed that at last the wind had changed. It was fair,

and the other watch had set the fore and main lower t'gall'nts as well as the main upper t'gall'nt; the yards were checked in a bit and were no longer hard upon the lee backstays. She was going course. The helmsman relieved from the wheel came forward gleefully, as if he were personally responsible for the change in our fortunes and was to be congratulated upon the fetching of the fair wind. Roy, the Australian boy in our watch, relieved him, with muttered dark threats of what would be done with him if he allowed the ship to lose that wind and brought it back from ahead again.

We mustered before the mate, round the small hatch below the standard compass platform between the boats on the after deck, and satisfied that we were all there he sent us for'ard again to stand by until we were needed. The second mate took charge and the mate went below. The style of the ship, as is usual in Finnish ships, was that the watch was permitted to retire into the foc'sle or elsewhere out of sight during the night watches, so long as the helmsman, lookout and police were always at their posts and the others were instantly available whenever they might be required. There weren't many "others." Walker and I at that time were sharing a tiny cabin in the foc'sle house, immediately abaft the galley; it had the great advantage of providing a kind of dark room for the photographic work—the loading of the film magazines, and so on; there was no developing to be done under those conditions—but it also possessed the very great disadvantage of being infernally wet. It looked out over the low side just abaft the fore rigging, and it was exactly this spot that ninety per cent of the heavy seas

that broke aboard chose to sweep over the bulwarks. They swept aboard ceaselessly and smashed themselves against the steel bulkhead of our door, spurting through its many imperfections, and no patent we could devise would keep that cabin dry. The door fitted badly and had no lock; the port leaked, even when it was puttied up. The sea seeped in from the galley, and from the deck outside. At times there were six inches and more of cold sea water swirling about the floor; our bunks were wet through constantly, and there was no means of drying them. We had one small oil lamp, over the glass of which salt sprays drove at times, splitting glass after glass until there was but one left aboard. There was nothing much in the cabin, save the two shelf-like bunks fore-and-aft along the interior wall, a low bench in which there were two lockers, always half full of water, in which sea boots and socks were supposed to be kept, a tiny cupboard and a tinier table. There were also numerous cockroaches which delighted to congregate around the lamp for the warmth it gave; despite all our efforts we could never exterminate them, and after a while one became more or less accustomed to their unwelcome presence.

Into this tiny wet hutch of a place we were glad to retire a little after 4 o'clock that morning, to stand by until half-past five when coffee was ready preparatory to the commencement of work at six. I had the lookout at five; Walker was free until six. His turns followed mine; we worked always in rotation, following each other at the lookout, then at the police (discarded in the day watches of course, when everybody was on deck and working), and lastly at the wheel. Since we both had the

first hour free we proceeded to make the best use of it, keeping the lamp alight to maintain a little warmth; we stretched along the tops of our respective bunks to await the coming of coffee or the two whistles with which the second mate summoned us out on deck. We half expected to be called out before long, to give her some more canvas while the wind was fair. She could carry the fore upper t'gall'nt and perhaps the main royal.

About twenty past four there came the dreaded two whistles. I slipped out on to the deck, all ready for whatever it might be. Walker had dozed off lightly but was up the instant the whistles blew. We went out on deck, and the second mate told us to set the fore upper t'gall'nts'l, the job we had been expecting to do. He sent Finila aloft to loose it, since he was the youngest. We others went round to the lee capstan, by the halliards, and threw the coiled up buntlines and downhauls from their pins on to the deck so that everything would be clear for setting the sail. We looked after capstan bars, and stopped the fore sheet on to the pinrail bollards so that the capstan would be free for use. Ordinarily the sheet was led there and made fast on the capstan.

I saw Walker also laying into the weather fore rigging, going up the mast.

"You don't need to go," I said. "Finila has already gone, and one's enough up there."

It was much better to stay on deck and just tramp around the capstan; you could work up a little warmth, which you certainly could never do high in the rigging.

"I know," he said, "the second mate told me to go. Two of us can get it loosed quicker."

If the second mate had told him to go, then there was nothing further to be said on the subject. The sail had been well made fast when last it was taken in—strangely enough, Walker and I had made it fast on that occasion —and gaskets enough to hold it against a Cape Horn hurricane had been marled around it. With frozen wet hands it is hard to cast gaskets adrift from frozen sails; there was wisdom in the second mate's decision to send two aloft, though it had been rarely done in my experience. There was then about an hour to coffee time; we should have to hurry to have the job done and the halliards coiled down before three bells. Tradition had it that if we lost any of this treasured half-hour break for coffee time, we did not get it back again. We should have to begin work at four bells, no matter what happened. It was vital, then, to get that t'gall'nts'l stretched as rapidly as possible. The two aloft and the one at the wheel left us four for the capstan—none too many, but we could manage. These were Sjölund, French Peter, Bergqvist and I. The second mate was also there to lend a hand and take charge.

After a while Finila called down that the sail was loosed and everything was clear for setting. The weather was clearing a little, though it still rained; now and again the moon peeped through the clouds, half-heartedly and with coldness. The ship wallowed on steadily, with a constant stream of icy waters about her decks and all her ropes and blocks creaking eerily as she rolled.

We led the halliard end to the capstan, inserted our bars, and tramped around, heaving hard as we strove to push the capstan around and the ship rolled aweather,

having all we could do to keep our feet and the bars still fast in the capstan as she rolled alee. There was no chanteying. Nobody spoke. It was a long job, heaving that heavy yard aloft by that antiquated process, but there was no other. Slowly, slowly we tramped around the capstan, steadily heaving. There was no slightest hint of daylight, nor could there be for at least three hours.

When the yard was still a foot or two from fully hoisted, the watchful second mate saw that there was a gasket foul around the weather clew. That had to be cleared before the sail could be set properly. He shouted aloft for it to be cast free. Walker, who had been in the rigging hauling up slack on the buntlines and the downhauls as the yard was slowly ascending, slipped down on to the lower t'gallant yard and went out and cleared the gasket, a simple operation which took him only a few minutes. We ceased heaving as soon as the second mate shouted, and did not begin again until a moment or two after we had heard Walker shout down that all was clear again.

"All clear, sir!" he shouted.

We had our bars out and were standing by beneath the foc'sle head, out of the weather. When we heard the "all clear" we came out again, and thrust our bars back in the capstan, and slowly began to grunt around once more. It was hard work, on the four of us; somehow the halliards seemed to come much easier after the gasket had been cleared. We hove steadily on without a thought save that our job should be quickly done and no other job follow it, so that we might betake ourselves to our

coffee in peace. The wind had freshened a little and the sea with it, but those things did not matter. We were going course.

And then, without the slightest warning, there was a wild roar of smashing chains and blocks and a crash of something swiftly descending. We looked aloft in alarm to see the t'gallant halliards hurtling down; the manila fall wildly unrove, the chain part swept upwards into the sky; the giant blocks thundered about murderously, and high aloft the yard crashed down on to something. For the instant we did not know what had happened. Thinking that the yard itself might come down we hastily got away from the foot of the mast, where the capstan was, and looked aloft to see what had happened and what damage was done. We saw that the halliards were carried away, and the upper t'gallant yard was down on the lower. It was so black that we could not see anything else. There was no moonlight, just then . . . We did not think that either of the boys aloft had suffered any harm, imagining them to be in the rigging well out of the way of the falling yard. The second mate shouted aloft to see if they were both well.

There was no answer for a minute, and then Finila, in a frightened voice, called down that Walker was between the yards.

Twenty seconds after that every member of the watch was in the t'gall'nt rigging. Here we found a ghastly scene. Walker, apparently unconscious, was lying loosely over the lower t'gall'nt yard, with the upper yard close above him, but not close enough to hold him there. He was not jammed and would have fallen with the motion

of the ship had not French Peter and young Finila quickly grasped him and held him there, Peter from the yard and Finila crouched against the mast. He was lying quite close to the mast, with his feet still resting on the footrope of the lower yard. From where he was he was quite invisible on deck. He must have been standing there, gazing down on the scene of the bows playing through the water far beneath, fascinating to look upon in the darkness of the night with the white water breaking ghostily about and the drumming of the strong wind on the sails . . . The second mate was there, too. Hurried examination disclosed no injuries. There was no mark of any kind. There had been slight bleeding, it looked, from the mouth and nose; this was then stopped, in that short interval. There was no mark on the face, no injury on the head. We could feel no injury on the body. Our hands were frozen with the wind, and we could not feel much; his body was frozen, too. He was unconscious, that was all we knew. We had to get him down on deck, which was something of a job from that height. The ship now began to roll heavily and the rigging to work dangerously; the yard on which he lay slipped backwards and forwards a little, with the ship's motion. Frenchman and Finila had all they could do to hold him; someone brought a pot of water from the foc'sle tank, and with this the second mate and I set about the task of reviving the unconscious boy. We worked feverishly; we wanted to bring him to, to help us get him down the rigging—a difficult and dangerous job, made trebly so if he did not regain his senses.

Moments passed, and nothing happened. He showed

no signs of coming to. The moon broke through the clouds, for a moment, and poked a pale finger at the scene, ominously. Its pale light was reflected in his paler, unconscious face; he was pretty badly hurt, we feared. The second mate swung on to a backstay and slid down to the deck to call the captain. Bergqvist and Sjölund set about the rigging of a gantline and block, to get him down. French Peter and Finila still clung to the body, steadying it against the ship's wild rolling, while I worked on to bring him to. Twenty minutes must have passed. Nothing happened. He did not come to. He showed not the slightest sign of life . . . The block was rigged and we set the line fast around his body, gently, and lifted him from between the yards and began the descent of the rigging. Slowly, slowly, with infinite care, infinite difficulty, infinite pains, we lowered him down the rigging. We took great care lest the rolling of the ship bring him into sudden collision with anything to hurt him the more. French Peter, Finila, the second mate, and I, steadied him down, ratline by ratline, while Sjölund and Bergqvist carefully slacked away the gantline. We were half an hour going down. What were we to do? I thought, as we came down the rigging; what could we do if he were badly hurt? We had no surgeon, no doctor. We had scant medical supplies, no hospital. We had no wireless to summon other vessels to our aid, in the remote possibility of any others being near us. (And probably there was none within a thousand miles.) We had no engines to speed our way, if we had to rush for some port to land him. Talcahuano, in Chile, was the nearest port, and that was two thousand miles away. Two thou-

sand miles! The ship, since leaving New Zealand, had been averaging about seven hundred miles a week; it would take perhaps three weeks to reach Talcahuano, if we could do it then. Hell! We were in a mess! There was *nothing* we could do; quite nothing.

And yet I did not realise how true that was.

We reached the deck at last. Someone had laid a blanket by the capstan at the foot of the rigging. A figure was standing there with a hurricane lamp. We lowered him down, and laid him on the blanket. Captain Svensson took one slow look.

"He is dead," he said.

CHAPTER VI

"HE IS DEAD!"

"HE is dead."

That was all the captain said.

Dead? *Dead!* But he had been alive! He had gone up those shrouds, not an hour before, in the healthy virility of young manhood, strong, full-blooded, energetic, able. Death was a thing that came to you in beds ashore, with lowered lights and screens around, and sorrowing friends and weeping relatives; and this was the deck of a full-rigged ship! Death was a thing that came to you when you were old, and worn out a little with the fight of life, and broken-down, and used up, and content to go; and this was a young boy, setting out upon life's first adventure. Dead? There must be some mistake! . . . We could not bring ourselves to imagine that he was dead, though he looked so lifeless lying there on the blanket; we had never thought of death while we tried high aloft to bring him to, and then went slowly through that awful descent of the swaying mast. We did not think of death, but of what we might do to mend his life. Our hands were so numbed with the cold that we could not feel whether he lived or was dead; when we inserted them beneath his jacket to feel, they were warmed (for he was warm, for a while) and we were misled. But there was no real fear of death among us, until the Captain said those words. He looked so peace-

ful, as if he were asleep; there was no sign of outward injury. We could feel nothing that was broken, and see no hurt.

Yet he was dead right enough. I did not believe it. I felt for myself, at wrist and heart, but again I could not be sure because of the numbness of my hand, allied now perhaps with a certain numbness of mind . . . We carried him, in the blanket, in beneath the foc'sle head, out of the reach of the seas; the other watch had come out on deck uncalled, shivering, frightened, appalled at this sudden catastrophe. A rough bier was made there hastily, in the narrow space between the windlass and the fore peak hatch, of sacks of shakings with a cloth of old canvas over them. Here we laid him, still in his sea boots and oil skins, and drew the blanket over his body. A hurricane lamp we hung to a beam above to illuminate the scene, and its soft rays threw deep shadows into the gloom, ghostily. Outside the wind howled and the sea swept across the deck as it willed; here around the youthful crew stood, in deepest sorrow. There was nothing said. There was nothing to say. Hours later the daylight came, and no one noticed it. The hurricane lamp burned on . . .

For all that day the captain and I stood watch over the body. I still did not believe that he was dead; I *knew* he was, and yet in some curious way my mind refused to believe the message which frayed nerves constantly sent to it. We had some curious idea, the captain and I, that he might still be alive, that there might have been a mistake about his heart. We were not medical men. There was no one in the ship with medical

knowledge. We could not say what was the matter with him. We remained with him, never leaving. Now and again we lifted the blanket that shrouded his face, and gazed below. There was never any change in what we saw. Nothing happened. He did not come to. Hourly his body grew more stiff and cold; the death mask came upon the face, and set about the eyes, staring so peacefully, and about the soft lines of the boyish mouth. The face was white and bloodless, the body rigid, and yet we did not leave. We stayed on and watched, not now in hope, but because there was nothing else we could do. . . .

It was not until next day when we were getting him ready for the burial that we were given unmistakable evidence of the suddenness of his end. We made a final examination, for we did not wish to record in the log an entire ignorance of the cause of death; we turned him over and the blood gushed from him. There was blood upon the bier, and blood high upon the yards and on the sails; we had not seen it there when we had been intent on other things. Blood gushed into the scuppers, and into the sea. His heart must have been burst by the contact of the upper yard; death came to him with a merciful celerity, and there had been no pain. He must have been dead the instant after the yard came down. Small Finila, who was in the rigging not five yards away, said that he heard nothing but one soft unconscious moan. He did not cry out. He made no sound. He could not have had the slightest idea of the danger he was in. He must have been lying peacefully over the yard, his work done, gazing at the scene of the decks far below. There he would find inspiration and a kind of wild satisfaction;

I know that he used to delight in gazing down at the entrancing scene of the sea and the decks, from high aloft. Who with any soul would not? That was our pleasure, that and clinging to the fighting wheel, steadying the wayward, noble ship to her course. He loved these things. He loved to fight the maddened sails, high aloft; he loved to pause a moment, and gaze in admiration—and more than admiration—at the ship and the sea, forgetful of gale and sleet and rain, heedless of the cold and his insufficient clothes.

He had nothing to do, when the gasket was cleared. The yard was nearly hoisted then, and Finila could easily manage all that was still to be done. After the yard was up and the halliards belayed, there would be the buntlines to stop off on the jackstays, so that they would be overhauled and not chafe on the canvas—sailing ship economy demands close attention to all these points—and it was this task that he was waiting for. Otherwise he could have descended and been out of the way . . . He had no warning, and no slightest idea of danger. He knew that it was a sailor's maxim never to go on a yard that was being hoisted; he did not know of the danger of remaining beneath one. He had not been told of that, and no one could see from the deck, in the gloom of the night. He had no reason to think that the upper yard might fall, or that the halliards or anything else might carry away; he had no slightest reason to believe that he was in any danger, and any of us might just as easily have met the end he did. The fates combined to kill him. Nine times in ten, the mate would not send two aloft to loose a sail. The circumstances of that morning were

special. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, nothing would carry away. And nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, no one would be on the lower yard. If he had been a little further out on the yard he might not have been killed. If he had been a little further in, he could have leapt into the rigging. If he had been further out, too, the second mate would have seen him from the deck and we would not have begun to heave again. Where he was he could not be seen; not even Finila, so close by, could see him. If he had had the slightest idea that the yard was coming down, he could have slipped down on to the footrope and have got clear that way. The lifts did not carry away. The upper yard came down simply on its lifts, and nothing broke but the halliards. Another line in this fell web of fate was the fact that the weather side of the lower yard was a little higher than the lee that morning; if he had been standing on the lee side of the yard he would not have been killed. . . . He lay in death peacefully, without fear or pain on his face, quietly in repose. He was asleep, and would not wake again. He was resting and could not be called. He died while peacefully looking down from aloft, in quiet meditation, lost in the gentleness and beauty of his thoughts; he never had the slightest idea that his end was come. He died at his job, doing what he was sent to do, with nothing to say about it; he died with his sea boots and his oilskins on, and the wind and the sea around him.

It was a ghastly shock to everybody. We could find no allaying thoughts, that first day, to bring balm to our minds; we could think of no softening circumstance,

nor qualifying condition that made the tragedy of his death less bitter, less difficult to bear. It was so sudden, so inexplicable, so undeserved! And so *wasteful*, too; why should he die? There were others more fit for death than he. He had brains, ability, courage, initiative—or he would not have been there. He had had a grand idea, and had sought to carry it out, as best he might; it was his wish that he should try, together in this Cape Horn ship, to catch some wisp of the spirit of these lovely sailing ships, some semblance of the romance of their voyagings, the beauty and the courage of their long, lonely contests with grim oceans and bitter winds. We should bring to the screen something of loveliness, which it largely lacked; we should place before cinema audiences a piece of life, to take down with the multitude of stories of false sentiment and gaudy show which were shadowed before them in ceaseless procession, and ceaseless monotony. We had risked everything for this. We were not motion picture photographers. We had no great skill, and no experience. We had no backing. We were prepared to lose all that we ourselves had staked, but not to throw away the capital of other persons. It had not been easy, to ship here; yet here he came, and here he had been, carrying on with his work as ordinary seaman in that foc'sle, asking for no concessions, receiving none. It had not been easy to carry on there, for him. I knew that. He was unused to rough work, to the constant demand of the sailing ship for the best that was in you always, despite too little sleep, too little food, too little crew. He had to become used to the wild, rough work aloft and because he was a first-voyager that was doubly

difficult for him. We older hands were not required to go aloft for the lesser jobs, the loosing of sail, overhauling of buntlines and the like. He was; that was part of his job—that and standing his trick at the wheel, and lookout and police, and all the other ramifications of the sailor's craft. He learnt quickly, falling easily into the sailor's ways. He had been a yachtsman, and that was invaluable. He had spirit, and that was everything. He had been seasick, and did not lay up. He had been tried to the uttermost limit, and carried on. He had been immersed in the deepest, blackest despair, wet through, hungry, sleepless, tortured by toothache, ill; and yet he had not given in. He had always gone on. He had not lost one watch on deck all the bitter voyage, and never had been late for his trick at the wheel. I knew what he suffered! I saw him tried. You do not live with a man through an experience like that, cooped up together in the one tiny comfortless cabin, without seeing through to the innermost shrine of his being. You do not know a man like that, without knowing all. And he was a man, splendidly and nobly . . .

And now he was dead.

Nothing could be done about it. It was the end.

Voices were subdued about the deck, and everybody was thoughtful. In the night there came more wind, and gloom, and weeping rain. The lookout, on the foc'sle head, stood huddled by the weather light tower, standing there motionless in the cold and rain, not walking up and down across the narrow deck in vain endeavour to keep warm. Aft at the changing of the wheel the helmsmen passed the course to each other softly, in quiet voices.

In the foc'sle the boys were gathered round the rough boards of the table, slung from its stanchions there, staring gloomily at nothing, thinking of this thing that had happened to us, trying to puzzle it out. Nobody ate. Nobody slept. Why? Why? *Why?* Constantly the query swept torturingly through our thoughts: why had he died? And not us? If one were to die, then why should it be he? What was all this that we had learnt at churches and at Sunday schools, when we were young? This talk about a Christ and God, whose world this was; was this the way He managed it? Was this the sort of thing He did? He was the Father of all men and every man, we remembered that we had been taught; then why did He kill them? . . . We were not clever persons, well versed in theology. We were not possessed of great minds, fed upon long study and abstract thought. We were not so old that we had learnt to find untruth in all things, the sham passing for the real, and the real neglected, unrecognised, and shunned. We were not of the class that could think out great theories, and compound vast and satisfactory philosophies for itself. We were young, and simple-minded and ordinary, and one of us was dead. We were concerned with life, and not with philosophies; it was our job to live, and not to theorise. We could not express the things we felt—I cannot now—and we did not talk about them. We had been going on carelessly, perhaps, doing the best that we could, looking with tolerance upon our neighbours, respecting them for the good they showed, prepared mostly to disregard the bad.

And now we found ourselves face to face with Death,

in all its horror, and on that first ghastly day we could not understand. We were bitter, disillusioned, hurt almost beyond endurance. We had not expected this. We had had our simple faith in life, and in the good in all men. We had not been afraid to die, if the need had arisen and there was nothing else to do; but this was death without reason, without need—condemnation, penalty, punishment without trial . . . We could not look upon death that first day as anything but the final and irrevocable end, to be staved off till the last extremity, avoided at all costs. We saw nothing in it but the horror, nothing beyond the grave. . . .

He had carved his name, a day or two before he died, at his place on the foc'sle table, deep into the grain of the pine. Now it mocked us there, that name that now was only name, and meant nothing. . . . Again and again we tried to reconcile his going with the theories we had learnt and the things we had been told; but we only knew, that first day, that he was dead.

Perhaps we had been going on carelessly, as so many people do, with foolish thoughts of some security of tenure of this life. We knew about death, of course, but we had not been expecting it—not there, in that ship of courageous youth. We knew, of course, that man was born to fight awhile and then to die, when—so we were taught—he would have the reward he had earned. But we had been going on, as so many people do, carelessly, from day to day and week to week, intent upon the little things, acting as if this world were all and the things that loomed big in it were really big . . . The Reaper drove home a bitter lesson, with this sudden and appalling shock.

GETTING IN THE MAINS'L IN A BLOW

MAKING FAST A SAIL AT SEA

The next day was a Sunday, May 26. The ship was then in longitude 118° 15′ W., latitude 48° 42′ S.—about 1,900 miles from Cape Horn, 2,850 miles from New Zealand, 1,700 miles from the coast of South America, at its nearest point. That was the nearest land. That day we buried him. It was a sullen, gloomy day of grey murk and storm rack, and wind that moaned and sighed sorrowfully in the rigging. The seas fell aboard constantly, and washed about the decks, smashing their sprays in pent-up fury against the hatch coamings and the bulkheads of the foc'sle house, driving their spume high up the shrouds, and wetting the lower masts to the caps. It rained frequently and the wind bit right through the thickest clothes. We did not mind that; we scarcely noticed physical trials when there were much greater mental ones to face and try to overcome.

We made a funeral stage of two long hatches, nailed together and covered with a bunting of signal flags. We washed the body, and wrapped it, still in its oilskins and sea boots, in a sheet. Then we placed it reverently in a canvas bag that had been made, with a place at the foot for pieces of iron and heavy weights to bear it down. The second mate sewed the canvas up. It was the first time he had done that job, he said; he hoped it would also be the last. He had seen others killed in these ships of sails, but there had been no occasion to bury them.

All the boys were there, grouped silently about the decks, but some did not look on.

The weather became gradually worse, and it began to look as if it would be too bad to heave-to. The daylight would be done at three o'clock.

A little before two we backed the main yard. The Finnish ensign was flying aft, at half mast. The helmsman slowly tolled the wheel bell—melancholy, moving sound. We moved for'ard to where the body lay in state, quite close to the mast where he was killed; Captain Svensson took the lead, and we bore the funeral stage slowly along the wet main deck and on to the poop, all hands carrying it. We would have buried him, in the ordinary course of events, from the quarter deck, just by the break of the poop—traditional place for sea burials. But there came too many and too heavy seas there and we had to go on the poop. Here, in the open space between the poop capstan and the bole of the mizzen mast a rough flag-draped stand had been made, and here we laid the stage with his remains. The ship lurched heavily and pitched and fell uncomfortably in the seas; we laid the stage 'thwartships that it might keep its place. The water washed sorrowfully around the low main deck, and lapped gently at the rusted old grey sides; here and there it broke into a little fitful spray; the wind had dropped a little, and moaned now softly and dismally in the rigging; the ship was stopped, with the main yards backed, and had no steerage way; aft the log hung over the rail lifelessly, where the mate had forgotten to haul it in. Bareheaded, deeply moved, the crew gathered around, rolling slightly with the motion of the ship, finding some difficulty at times in keeping their feet. Everybody was there, the two mates in their Sunday best, with white collars on—how strange they looked!—the sailmaker, who had shaved, the cook with whitened face and black-rimmed eyes, the eighteen-year-old A.B.'s and the

sixteen-year-old ordinary seaman, Swedish Finn, Frenchman, Londoner, Australians, West Indian negro.

The captain began to read the service. There was a Swedish prayer book in the ship, that had belonged to one of the boys, and an English New Testament. These were used. The canvas shroud was draped with the Finnish flag—white and pale blue—because there was neither English nor Australian in the ship. There was no flag, except the Finnish. But the colours of that—purity and loyalty—were appropriate . . . Sometimes we could not hear what the Captain said when the ship lurched to meet a sea as she wallowed there and the wind momentarily moaned louder in the rigging. A great white albatross swooped by; there came nothing else to join us in our lonely service.

It was the first sea burial I had seen. I never want to be present at another. The deep solemnity of it, the lasting penetration into the very roots of one's being, the awful impressiveness of this last earthly ritual that marks an end and a beginning, leave a scar on one, witnessed as a member of a sailing ship's crew at sea, that never can be forgotten. Ashore it is different. You go away. You see other people afterwards, other scenes. You do other things. You *have* to go on, and think of other things. But at sea the scene remains unchanged, and nothing ever happens, until the voyage ends, to soften poignant, tragic memories. You cannot forget! Nor think of other things; there is always too much to remind you . . .

The Captain read a Swedish prayer, and one of the Australians who had once done a little lay preaching in

a tiny South Australian church, said an English prayer. We sang a hymn—"Nearer My God to Thee"—in Swedish and in English, those who were Swedish in that language, and those who were English in theirs, together. It made no difference. We sang another Swedish hymn, an old, old chant of infinite sadness. And then the Captain gave a short address, in his own language, addressing the dead by name, as is the Swedish custom, as if he still lived and were there, as if the spirit were there listening to the last oration the body would receive.

"Ronald Walker," he said, "here we are all gathered, your old shipmates, around your bier, to bid you a last farewell; and this is a better day for you than it is for us. For you have been judged tried enough in the mockery we have still to carry on; you have been judged proven fit to enter into the Kingdom of God, young and fresh as you are, while we who have lived longer have not yet shown our worth, and we have to go on . . . This is not all! We know that; for if it were, there would not be anything. This earth in which we still remain, from which you have been called, this earth of ours is just the testing place, and when we have proved ourselves here we shall come. Here we are just children, going through our school; and you have qualified . . . You lived worthily; you sleep well. Nor will you awaken upon the Cape Horn road! You will awaken in glory with Eternity before you; the Voice that calls upon the last day will reach you here, lying in your cold and unmarked grave, as clearly as it will reach to those who sleep on land . . . Judged from the standards that rule our lives, your end has come to you untimely—terribly so—but you have

gone quietly to a resting place which God grant we may all gain as worthily; you sleep peacefully in a quietude that will be undisturbed . . . For such as you death is no end, but a beginning—a better setting out, maybe, than was life. . . . We thank you for your comradeship in the too short time you have been with us, and we bid a last farewell to this clay in which you dwelt among us, drawing from your departure this simple lesson, that if we shall live as you did, in the end our going may be as easy, our sleep as peaceful, and our entrance unto Eternity as certain and as deserved . . . We look forward now with hope to meeting you in a better world . . ."

There followed prayer, and a long service. I saw the cook's white face gleaming wet; the voices of the sailors singing the hymns rose fitfully above the sighing of the wind; they were grown older by years, these boys, in one night; boyhood was gone from them utterly . . . The darkness came down, imperceptibly. We carried him to the side. The hatch was tilted slightly; there was a dull splash as the weighted shroud entered the water . . . And so it was all over.

And yet one turned from the sight of the funereal sea with somehow a peace of mind—or semblance of it—that came unsought. These things were true! This Eternity, and this belief in God; for if they were not, how could there be anything? How could anyone go on? Life is a ghastly, unintelligible business of sham and hell mockery, and incomprehensible happenings, and basest fortune to those who least deserve foul blows, and the winnings and the prizes, maddeningly often, where they are least deserved; life is a game of kings and poverty, pomp and

garbage tins, wedding bells and burials . . . What may a man do, save believe?

Midnight brought a gale from the south and stinging cold and merciless hail. I was coatless at the wheel and the second mate, without any himself, brought me his. He said he had two, but I did not see him find the other one.

We put the ship before the wind again, and sailed on for what might come.

CHAPTER VII

THE COST

ALTHOUGH they were all so young, there was no one in the *Grace Harwar's* crew that voyage—except the two young South Australians who had not been to sea before and had therefore seen nothing—who had not been shipmates with death upon some previous occasion. The master, in the four-masted barque *Mariechen;* the mate, in the barque *Auldgirth* and the dismasted four-master *Dundee;* the second mate in the full-rigger *Pampa* and the barque *Prompt;* the sailmaker, in the four-masted barque *Hougomont;* Bergqvist, ordinary seaman, in the four-masted training ship *Fennia;* Beckman, in the big *Herzogin Cecilie;* the cook, in the barque *Lingard;* the messboy, in the barque *Loch Linnhe;* the nigger, in the barque *Penang.* The mortality in the ships of sails through their declining years has indeed been heavy. These long, low, heavily sparred, wallowing steel sailers always were inclined to be dangerous, running heavily in a big sea; most victims have been swept overboard from their decks, and not so many have met their ends in the rigging. For the most part one is safe enough aloft, provided nothing carries away. It is when the gear begins to carry away that lives are lost; and of course most of the ships are very old now, and run upon the utmost limit of economy as they are, perhaps it is only

to be expected that something will carry away, now and again.

The loss of young life in these last of the sailing ships, these last few years, when one comes to think of it and reckon up names, is appalling. Over the five years 1924-1929 my own records show that 148 lives have been lost, from seventeen sailing ships. Those figures are by no means complete. They are only the deaths that I *personally* know of; probably the official statistics (if there are any) for the period would be at least double the number. My figures do not touch, for example, American ships. I know nothing about them, and have been able to trace no records as to fatalities on board United States square-riggers. Nor have I any records from the German sailers, nor the French—with the exception of the barque *Eugene Schneider*—nor the Belgian, nor Spanish, nor Italian. Most of these are gone now, but it is not improbable that they killed a sailor or two before they went.

One does not hear of these deaths. They are not chronicled anywhere, when they occur in other nation's ships. No space is devoted to them in the newspapers, nor do the reports of sailing ships' arrivals indicate always at what cost they have made their voyages. The only way to keep some record of the numbers lost is by close perusal of the small local newspaper published in the Åland Islands, where practically all of the Finnish sailing ships belong; here now and again appears the obituary notice of a youthful mariner, occupying little space, given no glaring headlines. From the captains,

too, of one's acquaintance, and from the dwellers of the foc'sle, one gleans news of others who have gone.

I do not know much about the old British sailing ships, either; my seafaring days have been at the end of their time, when most were gone, and those that were left were not always typical of their predecessors. I cannot guess at the annual mortality of sail in its heyday, but I think that it was probably pretty heavy.

The stories of these deaths bear, many of them, a monotonous similarity. From the French barque *Eugene Schneider*, and the Finnish four-masted barque *Port Caledonia*, all hands have gone. From the Danish five-masted barque *Kobenhavn* which left Buenos Aires bound to Port Adelaide in the middle of December, 1928, and was never again heard of, seventy young boys lost their lives. The *Grace Harwar* has herself lost three lives in the last few years. The *Hougomont* has lost one, the *Winterhude*, *Lawhill*, and *Herzogin Cecilie* one each; the *Penang* three; the *Killoran*, *Olivebank*, *Greif*, *Ponape*, *Garthpool*, *Fennia*, *Pampa*, two each; the *Archibald Russell* four. These are not complete figures by any means, and practically the whole of those who have been lost are boys. It could not be otherwise, when there are only boys to be found in the ships . . .

Laden down to the scuppers with coal, the little barque *Killoran* found herself under shortened canvas in the far south of the South Pacific Ocean on the night of April 26, 1926, running heavily before an increasing south-westerly gale. The barque was then about forty days out on a voyage from Newcastle, New South Wales, to

Callao. The fores'l had split in the morning of that day, and all hands had been called to get in what was left of it. A hopeless endeavour to bend a new fores'l in its place had to be given up; the seas were falling aboard the barque heavily, from end to end, and sweeping her main deck, and it would have been dangerous to work on those exposed decks for too long. It was tempting Providence. Since the fores'l had gone only the two lower tops'ls—the fore and main—remained set to the gale, and all hands stood by under the break of the poop lashed up in their oilskins, ready for whatever might come. The watch which should have been below had no objections to being on deck, since a huge sea had washed the foc'sle out long since and it was as comfortable outside as in—or it might be better to say that it was as comfortless inside the dripping, low foc'sle as it was out on the stormy, sea-swept decks. There was no comfort anywhere.

With the fores'l off her the barque seemed to make heavier weather of it. Before she had been running with her head high, and although the huge seas, as each of them swept from the murk astern past her with a boiling of foam and spiteful tumbling of spray, fell heavily aboard over the rails, they could not press her down and make her unmanageable. The going of the fores'l made her run worse, much worse; she still did ten knots, but she was the devil to steer and her head yawed wildly. The seas fell aboard with a more vicious shock, and now and then the long jib-boom forgot to race above the foam but dipped into the sea, green and deeply. Nothing of the sky could be seen. One great, endless cloud seemed

to cover the whole dome of the heavens, and hour after hour as the *Killoran* raced on, it was still there. The gale had been blowing for three days then, freshening slightly as each of them passed. It was heavy weather, of course, but still not dangerous. The crew was cheerful enough about it; it was good fair wind, blowing them to Callao, and they looked forward to a quick passage.

There were two at the wheel; had been since the gale began. She didn't steer very easily at the best of times. With the fores'l gone oil was put on the seas, through two bags hung over for'ard, but that did not make much difference and before long it had to be given up, anyway, because all the oil was gone. Sailing ships either now or at any other time of their careers are not known to be especially well equipped, even with the few bare necessities of their voyages—food, water, oil. Nobody was concerned much at the news that the oil had all gone, although it was only too obvious then that she was not rising to the seas as well as she should have been. She seemed to have grown just a little tired of the conflict, and as the succeeding seas added more and more to the weight of waters pressing down on her decks, she tried less and less to free herself. She put her head down, and went. She was worse to steer than ever; but still there was not anything dangerous about it and she ran on.

And then suddenly, without the slightest warning, one of the great seas sweeping up from astern did not pass her with a wild boiling of foam and hissing of waters. She did not rise to it, and it swept madly right over her stern. The force of it shook the whole ship; she shuddered violently, and now gamely tried—and hope-

lessly—to rid her decks of something of their heavy burden. The sea smashed in the poop skylight, and flooded out the saloon; it smashed one of the boats from the skids, and down on the main deck twisted the steel flywheels of the pumps as if they had been leaden toys. It smashed away the main fiferail and washed right over the galley; it filled the decks with seething, maddened water from end to end, so that at no place was anything of the wooden deck visible. And it did more than that, too . . .

At the time the master and the mate were having a hasty bite of a supper they had neglected for hours. The second mate, whose watch it was, was standing by the fore part of the poop, and if he had not been able to wedge himself securely there he would have gone overboard. As quickly as they could, the officers rushed up on deck. They looked aft, and saw that nobody was at the wheel. They looked again, and saw that there was no wheel—no wheel, no binnacle, no helmsmen, no anything! All gone! Gone where that sea had gone, without a sound.

Now the *Killoran* was fighting for her life. She broached to, and the seas so fell over her decks that the lee rail remained under water, about eight feet. Now the tops of the hatches were never visible. A thunderous roar in the hold, audible even above the shrieking of the gale and the tumultuous smashing of the seas, told the crew that the coal cargo had shifted, and they looked upon each other expecting that their last moment had come. What could they do? The boats? One was gone, smashed to atoms; the other was lashed on the skids.

They left it there; no one thought of doing anything with it, for what chance might a paltry lifeboat have when a two-thousand ton barque must perish? They gathered together on the poop, clinging to what stanchions had been left in the chaos there, and waited for the end they fully expected.

Nothing happened. More great seas raced along at the barque now that she was lying helplessly in the sea, instead of past her as they had when she had been running before it. She lay over at the same horrible angle, almost on her side; aloft the rags of sails had gone, and she was stripped quite clean. The rumble of the shifting coal had ceased, and when after a few moments the crew discovered that they still lived, they prayed to God that it would shift no further. They didn't give themselves much hope, just then; but still there was a chance. Another great sea, huger than its predecessors and as big, almost, as the first one she had pooped, raced at the barque and swept aboard her, smashing right over the low side and sending great cascades of foam and spray high above the weather bulwarks, which were lifted up to the grey dome of the sky at an unnatural angle.

The crew looked at the sea-filled main deck again.

"God in heaven!" cried the mate. "We shall all be at the bottom inside five minutes! The hatch is broken in!"

They looked, such as still cared to or thought that there was anything which could yet affect them to see. There, in the swirling waters covering the main deck, battered, twisted, scarcely recognisable, hatch covers floated about. That was the end, absolutely. She might have lived through the night, broached-to, helpless, with-

out sails and without helm as she was, though the chance was poor; with the hatches gone she would sink like a stone quickly and without a trace. *Killoran* would then be just one more of the many square-rigged ships which have set out, coal laden from New South Wales bound to the West Coast of South America, and never have arrived. Perhaps a good many of her conquered sisters have been beaten in just such a manner as this; their hatches have gone, in the moment of battle, and they were handicapped right out of the fight.

Nobody said anything. There didn't seem anything further to say. They huddled together, waiting for the end. A younger one looked with terrified eyes upon the raging sea which soon must claim him; an older one looked above, and was not afraid.

And then she lifted her lee side a little, ever so little, and rolled something of her main deck into view. The mate, looking to see how extensive was the danger to the smashed hatch rather than with any hope, saw the hatch lift slowly into view. He saw that it still stood! That it was not smashed in! That there might still be some hope! The breakwater, built of chained down heavy planks, with which the hatch had been covered to stand against just such an emergency as this, had gone, and these planks, floating around the main deck with other assorted wreckage, deceived the mate into thinking that the hatch had gone. *That* hadn't happened; at least, not yet.

The ship was still safe in that regard, but again there came the rumbling of the coal as the cargo shifted more heavily over. The *Killoran* was now almost on her beam

ends, rolling with a dying desperation. No one could stand up now; it rained furiously, but no one noticed that. They had seen that the hatch still stood, and they were planning to save their ship—a hopeless business, apparently, but who would not try? Her helm was gone, her cargo shifted, her lee side under water, her sails blown to shreds, two of her crew killed; and still the gale increased rather than moderated and there was no easing off even after the passing of a squall. Somebody said that she might ride it out to a sea anchor. There was no sea anchor; they had to make one. They descended into the sail locker and dragged out a spare tops'l, but they had to get it for'ard to prepare the dragnet of a sea anchor to which the ship could lie. It was impossible to get it for'ard—utterly impossible. They tried, not once but many times. The first time the sea came and knocked them all violently down, and washed the sail out of their hands as if no one had been holding it; they took out another sail, and tried again. Again they were knocked sprawling the moment they tried to carry it along the main deck; a boy's leg was jammed under a spare spar, and badly broken. Then the sail was taken from their hands and borne away by the sea, gleefully overboard.

Then they gave up the idea to rig a sea anchor. They lashed down the rudder head hard a-lee, but nothing happened. They decided to haul the yards around on the wind, to see if she would lie-to with some steadiness and safety in that manner. But they could not get at the braces, which were out at the side of the ship on the main deck, of course, and under water. They *did* get

at the braces, though; God knows how it was managed. Almost wholly under water most of the time, with the long grey seas coming along with murderous frequency and pouring themselves right over them, the handful of crew that was all the barque carried worked through the night to get the yards around to see if that would bring any palliation. Grey morning, foam filled and cheerless, dawned before they had the task accomplished; it made not the slightest difference.

So *Killoran* rode on through that south-west gale, still afloat, though no one in her knew why. She lay-to the sea a little better, after a while, with the helm lashed down and the yards around; they bent a rag of a stays'l head in the mizzen rigging to help her, and seeing that she still floated, descended into the hold through the lazarette hatch aft to get at the coal. They had to bale the saloon out before they could open the lazarette hatch, and then they had to shift, in the Stygian, horrible darkness there, hundreds of tons of coal. Work! For three days they were at it, while the little barque rode out the gale; three terrible days without sleep, without any warm food, without everything save hope. No one had had much hope until they got the yards around; then they had been so immersed in the sea that they could not tell, sometimes, whether they were still aboard the ship or not, and did not care very much, seeing that even if they were still aboard they had no great expectations of staying there long. But they stuck to it, for all that, and gradually they got that little barque on something like an even keel again, and bent a few more rags of sail, and the gale moderated a little, and they came on.

They lashed two capstan bars together for a "wheel" and steered for the rest of the voyage by a boat compass placed upon a water butt; and for the rest of the voyage there were two empty bunks in the foc'sle, two that had not been empty when the little barque set out, to remind the survivors of what they had been through.

Afterwards the cook said he saw them go. He had been looking aft when the sea came. They had not seen it, and both of them went clean over the side, one over each rail. They were lashed to the wheel and it was smashed to pieces in their hands. He saw that one of them still held on to a spoke as he went to his grave.

There is never a voyage made by one of these old sailing ships which does not provide something—of tragedy, too often—of heroism and stoic gallantry upon many occasions. There is the four-masted barque *Olivebank*, for example. I do not know much about the *Olivebank* until she passed into Finnish ownership. I saw her once, a huge, heavy-looking four-master barque, in a corner of the Victoria Docks, at Melbourne, where she was discharging, during the war, a general cargo from New York. She was sailing under the Norwegian flag at the time. She was brought to Finland, I think, in 1923; she was then run almost to seed, and a considerable sum had to be spent on her before she could be sent to sea. Her first voyage under the Finnish flag was from Liverpool to Campbellton, New Brunswick, some time in 1924. She was chartered to load spruce for Melbourne, but by the time she arrived at the Canadian port the ice was so heavy in the roadstead that she could not move up the

river and the cargo of spruce had to be left for the *Lawhill* to load the following spring. From Canada the *Olivebank* sailed to Port Lincoln, Australia, for orders, hoping to pick up a cargo of wheat, but by the time she arrived at Port Lincoln the wheat had all been taken and there was nothing for her to do. Still in ballast, she was ordered on to Port Victoria, in the Seychelles, for orders, hoping there to pick up a cargo of guano for delivery in New Zealand. She had by then been about a year knocking round the world in ballast, earning nothing, finding nothing to carry, and her bottom was in a bad state with barnacles and sea-growth of all kinds. She tried to beat round the southern coast of Australia to stand up into the Indian Ocean and reach the Seychelles, but she could not manage it. The westerly winds howled against her, and she could make no progress. Being in ballast and dirty, she could not sail well against the wind, and in the end was driven in distress to Melbourne. She was then further from the Seychelles after two months at sea than she was when she set out on the passage. In Melbourne the master of the *Olivebank*, a Captain Troberg—giant of a man with flowing red beard—convinced of the hopelessness of trying to make a passage round the southern coast of Australia, decided to sail his ship to the Seychelles by way of Torres Straits. He bought some charts of that part of the ocean, took in some stores and some new canvas and set out again. The *Olivebank* sailed northwards along the coasts of New South Wales and Queensland, and then westwards through Torres Straits and into the north Indian Ocean, eventually arriving at the Seychelles too late for the charter for which

AFTER THE STORM: STRETCHING THE HALLIARDS AT THE MAIN CAPSTAN

CROJACK BRACE! A HAUL ON THE MIZZEN BRACES IN A CAPE HORN SEA

she had been fixed, but since tonnage was scarce at those islands to lift their guano, something else much the same was fixed up for her and she was loaded. That took about three months—three months of hard work and constant danger. There were no harbours around those islands—absolutely nothing at all, except thousands of tons of dusty guano (not quite so bad, thank heavens, as the Peruvian article) and a few score happy-go-lucky niggers to work it, when they felt like it, and to make trouble when they didn't. There was plenty of trouble.

From Mahé the *Olivebank* sailed to the Bluff, in the south of New Zealand, and was ninety days getting there; she was posted overdue before she arrived, but if her consignées had known anything of her reputation they would not have troubled. She wandered blandly along one day when everyone had almost given up expecting her, as if she had been three weeks on the road instead of three months. She discharged the guano at the Bluff and at Auckland, and, still without being dry-docked, set out for Port Lincoln again to load wheat for Europe. From Auckland to Port Lincoln is less than three thousand miles. The *Olivebank* was two months on the voyage. However, luckily for her there was plenty of wheat that season and she got a cargo at a more or less paying rate.

Then she set out, early in April of 1927, for Queenstown for orders. All April passed by, all May, all June, all July, all August, all September, and still she had not arrived nor had she been heard of. She wandered in, as unconcernedly as ever, to Queenstown harbour about six months after she had completed the loading of her cargo, and after she had been 152 days at sea. That year

seventeen big sailing ships loaded grain in Australia for the English Channel for orders. With the exception of the American six-masted barquentine *E. R. Sterling*, the *Olivebank* had the longest passage. The *E. R. Sterling* was dismasted and killed her mate. The *Olivebank* came round the Horn, of course, and was sixty days getting there. She had been delayed for weeks outside Port Lincoln, waiting for a fair wind; she had to wait for a fair wind because no other kind was any use to her. Considering the state of her bottom, it was remarkable that she didn't have even a longer voyage. It took half a gale to shift her, and she steered like a wild hog. The strain on the rigging caused by the drag of her barnacles in the water was immense; she had a boy killed on the road to Cape Horn, and one or two others were so affected by the hardships of that round voyage that they sickened and laid up before she was long on the road. One of them died not long after returning to Europe.

After such an experience as that—three years, all but a month or two, of weary tramping around the loneliest places of the world looking for cargoes for which she always arrived too late; three years with two cargoes, one wheat and one guano—one might expect that the *Olivebank* would have been scrapped. She was due for reclassification, too, to make things worse, and when the time came for Lloyd's men to have a look at her, serious faults were disclosed. Her doom seemed certain. She ought to have been scrapped; perhaps it would have been a good thing for future youthful mariners destined to sail in her—and one or two of them to die in her—if she had been. But she wasn't. Four thousand pounds were

spent on her, and she was made ready for the sea again. The rudder was lengthened a little, to see if that would make her steer a little better; her jib-boom was straightened, where it had been given an unlovely upward curve from a collision with a dock-wall somewhere; her rigging was strengthened, and hundreds of tons of barnacles and weird sea growths were scraped from her expansive bottom. Then she loaded a half-cargo of coal at Cardiff for Luderitz Bay, South West Africa, since that was all that could be found for her.

She arrived at Luderitz Bay, after a passage of about three months, and discharged the coal. Captain Troberg was still in her, despite his previous harassing experiences —there is a fine indomitableness about these old sea dogs of sail—but if he had known that he was to be sent to those Indian Ocean guano islands again he wouldn't have been. He expected to go on from Luderitz to Australia for wheat; but the fates decreed otherwise. The *Olivebank* was ordered from Luderitz to load guano at Ascension, one of the Indian Ocean Islands somewhere to the north of Madagascar, not far from the East African coast, for New Zealand. She set out from Luderitz in plenty of time to keep that charter but she arrived too late, just the same, and missed it. She made a rotten passage of it; she lay two weeks in the west winds belt, away below Good Hope, with no wind at all—not even a head wind. That was the kind of thing she was always up to and nobody was very surprised.

From Ascension, seeing there was no longer anything there for her to do, she went to Port Victoria, Mahé, to see if there might still be an odd cargo floating about

there. She lay idle for a month, but at last she was fixed to load at St. Pierre for Auckland. She sailed for St. Pierre and found it even worse than any of the other islands she had visited. It was nothing but a tiny guano dump, about four hundred acres in extent, lying in the midst of a hot and lonely ocean. It was devoid entirely of harbours, roadsteads, anchorages, facilities for handling the guano, or traces of civilisation of any kind except some guano spades. There was no water and there were no vegetables. By this time the ship was short of food, since it had not been possible to obtain much anywhere in the Seychelles and she was not going to run to Zanzibar to buy some. She might have been two months getting there, being what she was.

She was blown away from St. Pierre twice in the midst of loading operations, and once had difficulty in finding the place again. Captain Troberg had had a pretty poor opinion of the Indian Ocean guano trade before and had waxed eloquent about it in fluent descriptions to brother master mariners; on this second occasion he was so full up with it and all its works that he had quite nothing to say at all.

It took two months to load that guano, and everybody was well exasperated before it was all aboard. Although she wallowed and floundered along at sea like an overfed bullock trying to swim, that was at least preferable to being stuck helplessly at a place like St. Pierre. At last, however, in September, 1928, the last bagful had been emptied into the main hatch and the anchor was weighed from its insecure coral bed, and the old drifter set off for New Zealand once again. It had been quite impossible

to secure any food at the islands except a supply of turtles, and at the beginning of the passage the ship was short in the commissariat department. There was no help for it; she had never been provisioned for an indefinite ambulation around remote islands where nothing was to be had. Everybody was so pleased to see the last of the islands that at first they did not bother much about the scantiness of their diet, and if they thought about it at all they dismissed their misgivings with the hope of coming quickly to New Zealand.

But the passage to that Dominion was even worse than the previous one had been. One month, two months, three months came and passed, and still the *Olivebank* was at sea. She was in a desperate plight by then. The staple items of diet since setting out from St. Pierre was turtle meat and rice—all very well for a day or two, but dangerous when it came to weeks and months. By the time the ship was a month out there were serious signs of an outbreak of beri-beri in her crew. She carried only boys, by the way; no one else would have gone. She was down in the west winds then, and there was nothing to do but carry on. Where could she go? There was no port down there to call at for provisions; she could not have gone to Cape Town, for that was against the winds. All that she could do was to push on for Australia.

As the days passed things became worse and even more serious. Boy after boy was stricken down by the dread beri-beri, until they were all so weak that the ship could carry little sail because it could not be managed, and her progress, slow enough in the best of circumstances, became a deadly crawl maddening to the sufferers. They

wanted to give her sail to drive her on, and they could not because they could not manage it. They had one experience of that, somewhere about New Amsterdam Island, when a sudden storm found the ship with too many sails aloft and they had to come in. They laid into the rigging, the sick, the suffering, and the dying, and fought with those sails while they could. They were so weak that they had to cut holes in new sails with their knives to hold on; then the vicious squalls blew the sails to shreds, and more were lost than taken in. The ship steered very badly, as usual, and so weak were her boys that it was as much as they could do, two at a time, to turn the huge brute of a wheel.

Then the guano shifted. Seas filled the decks and it was quite impossible, of course, to open the hatches. As many of the unfortunate crew as could summon the strength—they were all down, then—had to crawl into the hold through a narrow hatch by the poop and claw at that guano from hold to hold, in the dark, helplessly, weakened by serious illness, without rest, scarcely knowing from hour to hour whether the ship still was above the seas or had gone beneath them—hoping, at despairing intervals, that she had given up the struggle, that they need not carry on with the hell of living any more. And yet she did float, and they did carry on. . . .

That storm passed by, but others came, finding the ship in more and more desperate a condition. Long since, the idea of making New Zealand had been abandoned, and the voyage was now a struggle to come to port—any port that held fresh food, and medical attention, and hope of rest. She tried to make up for Fremantle and for Albany,

in West Australia, and was driven by. Her people were frightened to bring her to the wind in case she shifted her cargo again, for they knew that they could do nothing in that case. She tried to make up for Port Adelaide, but again was driven by. In the end, rusty and in a terrible condition, the *Olivebank* arrived off Melbourne Heads one night in November of 1928, and signalled for urgent medical assistance. Some of her boys were face to face with death by then, and it was a bad business.

Her ill luck stuck to her. The wind was ahead for entering Port Philip Bay and she could not get in. A doctor at the Heads tried to come out but could not reach the ship because of the severity of the weather. All night long she beat on and off, so near and yet so far, and in the early hours of the morning at last could enter Melbourne Heads. Her anchor roared through the hawse-pipe at dawn that morning, and even as it roared one of her boys died. The doctor was too late.

Everyone in the ship was more or less seriously down to beri-beri, and not long afterwards another boy died. A sad spectacle swinging to her moorings with her flag half-mast and no one about on deck, the big barque lay for weeks at Melbourne Heads while her boys gathered strength to take her on her voyage. When they could, some of them cleared out; but the most of them stayed.

Nor is the tale of tragedy yet begun. The barque *Loch Linnhe*, bound from Norway to Durban in 1925, was so harassed by head winds in the North Sea at the commencement of her voyage that she had to run round the north of Scotland and make her way out into the

North Atlantic that way. Off the north of Scotland she ran into a howling westerly gale, and while all hands were on the foreyard getting in the fores'l the sail took charge, bellied madly back over the yard, and knocked three of them off. One went into the sea and the others landed on the deck. It made no difference . . . The four-masted barque *Hougomont* had a boy killed a year or two ago, on her decks. A heavy sea swept him off his feet and the wild rolling of the ship sent him crashing into a heavy pair of steel bollards, and he died from his injuries two days afterwards. The barque *Penang* had two boys swept overboard running for the Horn; again, a voyage or two later, another fell out of the mizzen rigging into the sea and was drowned. It is fatally easy to fall, if for an instant vigilance is relaxed or anything goes wrong. When the barque *Winterhude* was loading guano at one of the Peruvian islands in 1928, the horror of the job drove one of her boys insane and he jumped over the side and was drowned. The four-masted barque *Lawhill* lost a boy overboard on her last voyage round the Horn from London to Taltal. The ship *Pampa*, bound from Norway to Durban in 1924, met such heavy weather that her deck cargo had to be jettisoned. While he was superintending the work of getting it overboard, a sea came and swept the mate into the sea. Later in the voyage, running heavily before a gale, the two helmsmen lashed to the wheel were killed in an extraordinary manner. They were lashed, not to the wheel, but to the spanker boom above. No sail was set on the spanker boom and apparently its gear had been neglected for a long time; the ship's heavy working carried the boom guys away and

it swung madly out over the side, carrying the helmsmen with it. Over the sea their lashings carried away and they fell. They were never seen again. Working aloft in the four-masted barque *Herzogin Cecilie* upon her voyage from Gefle to Melbourne in 1927, a boy misjudged the weight of a block he was lifting. He neglected to lash it to the yard before he unshackled it, and when he took the shackle out he could not hold the block. He overbalanced, and block, tackle, and boy fell into the sea. He struck his head on the steel side as he went down. It was a mercy.

And so the tragic story might be continued, almost indefinitely; *Garthpool* had an apprentice die on her last voyage from Belfast down to Australia. Nobody knows what killed him; there isn't any doctor in these ships of sails. He sickened and died, and they buried him, since that was all they could do. Months later, in Port Adelaide, there was an inquiry which discovered nothing, of course. The voyage before that a man had gone from the mainyard and had fallen into the sea, where he rapidly sank and was drowned . . . In the small barque *Lingard* the second mate went aloft, on a voyage from the West Indies to France, to help get in the main topgallant sail in a squall. He had so small a watch that, if he did not help himself, there could be little done. (They carry small crews, these Finnish ships, though that is by no means peculiar to one nation.) The footrope broke and he was pitched headlong to the deck. He was dead when they looked . . .

In *Fennia*, the four-masted barque school ship that was

dismasted off the Horn in 1927, two were killed on one passage. One of the boys in the forecastle of *Grace Harwar* had been in her then, as an apprentice. One of the two was swept overboard when all hands were hastily repairing a smashed main hatch; the sea had washed the tarpaulins off and water was coming in, and it was imperative that it should be made watertight again. The main deck there was continually flooded with huge seas, but the crew had to work there just the same. Things went well, until almost the last moment. Everybody had been thoroughly wet by countless seas, of course, and had been knocked sprawling and bruised and breathless scores of times, but all were still there; they could even smile about it now that the work was almost done. Then a very big sea that they had not seen coming down swept over the decks and the hatch and the men and everything, and when it had cleared again and they got their breaths, one was not there . . . A few nights later another went from the main yard, in much the same manner as *Garthpool's* had gone. They were getting the mains'l in in a squall with heavy rain, and rolling it up on the yard one lost his precarious hold and pitched into the sea. He was lashed about with oilskins, had on two jerseys and two coats, and wore heavy leather sea boots, but he rose again in a second or two and saw the ship sweeping by. What could they do? They couldn't bring her to in a sea like that and stop; a running sailing ship in heavy weather can't stop. She has to go on. And they couldn't put a boat out, since they had to go on. One sailor said that on nights when there was a Cape Horn howl in the wind and the sting of the salt spray filled the air, he still heard the piercing shriek of that poor wretch as he saw

the ship go by and leave him there to drown; and he did not like to go upon the main yard, though he had come back in sail again twice since that.

All these deaths and tragedies are from the last few years—1927, 1928, 1929: and more besides have still to be recounted. Running for Cape Horn wheat laden from Australia early in 1928, the four-masted barque *Archibald Russell* had two boys swept from her jib boom and drowned. No one saw them go. One instant they were clinging to the headgear on the boom, feverishly getting in a sail. Then she dipped her head green into a sea, and when she rose again there was no one on the jib boom . . . The four-masted barque *Ponape*, outward bound with timber from the Baltic to Melbourne early in 1929, lost two small first voyage boys over the side in a gale somewhere north of Scotland. She is a good ship and not known as an exceptionally wet one, although all these modern steel sailers ship seas heavily deep-laden in a blow; she has brace winches and has the name of being "safe." But her boys went, for all that, and there could be no going back to look for them—even if they still floated to be found. For their sakes, it is fervently to be hoped that they did not. . . . Running for Cape Horn from Australia in 1927, the German full-rigged ship *Greif* had two boys swept over her side . . . In the same year, on the same voyage, the American six-masted barquentine *E. R. Sterling* was dismasted and one of her falling masts killed her mate . . .

One could go back further, still keeping to these last few years of the last days of sail, if the list is not already sufficiently extensive. On a Christmas night, one of these

last years, the French barque *Eugene Schneider* was run down by a steamer in the English Channel and, from a crew of twenty-six, four survived. Not long before that the Finnish four-masted barque *Port Caledonia* was smashed to pieces by the sea on the French coast, and nobody survived. Not long before that the Finnish ship *Albion* set out on a voyage from the Baltic, bound across to the United States. She never arrived, nor was the slightest trace of her ever found . . . And what has become of the five-master *Kobenhavn*, most magnificent of all of the last of the sailing ships? Where is she now, with her wireless and her auxiliary engines, and her seventy boys?

On her last voyage, the full-rigger *Monkbarns'* master died. A few voyages before that, the four-master *Garthpool's* master had died. In between, the master of the *Lawhill* had died,—all at sea. All these ships were brought on by their mates and saddened crews—mates and crews who were not to be blamed if they did not care to ship in sail again. For who would, after one of these tragedies? After the deeply moving spectacle of a burial at sea? After one's ear drums have been split almost to madness with the screams of the helplessly drowned? . . . And yet some of them do come back, for all that.

Sail has always taken its toll, of course, and there always have been ships with bad names that killed someone upon every voyage. But I could not name one of these surviving sailers that has not killed someone, and in their declining years they seem to have taken a turn for the worse.

One almost hopes that soon they will all be gone.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GHASTLY NIGHT

WE continued to meet with easterly winds. We were thirty-eight days out when Walker was killed, thirty-nine days when he was buried. Ten days later we were still nearly a thousand miles from Cape Horn, beating along against the full force of an easterly gale, standing now southwards towards the Pole, now north-north-easterly somewhere in the vague direction of Peru. The conditions became much worse, which was only to be expected while winter lasted. May went and June came. The sun retreated daily further northwards, leaving that lonely waste to its own melancholy. The cold was bitter, intensely agonising; it never ceased raining. So much water, indeed, came out of the sky that we found ourselves vaguely wondering that there was any left in the sea. Life was a ghastly, miserable business. There didn't seem, as the days crawled by, much that was good left upon the earth.

We hung on, grimly finding hope in the illusion that the east winds could not go on for ever. We read in the sailing directions that a high barometer indicated a wind change; there was a high barometer, but the wind did not change. We read that a low barometer indicated a coming westerly gale. There was a lower reading than ever the captain remembered before, down there; but the wind did not change and no gale came. The wind light-

ened, strengthened, died away, came back again—always from something east. We had, when we first heard that we were setting out for a depth of winter rounding of the Horn, drawn what solace we could from our imaginings that the winter months meant heavy westerly weather, and thought that, if we had to suffer more while we were in those frigid regions, at least the stronger winds would quickly deliver us. And here we had nothing but dead head wind, watch after watch, day after day, week after week. The wind rarely allowed the ship to come up to anything like her course; we sailed along the one tack and gained some longitude, but at the same time we were drifting steadily to the north and losing latitude. If we gained latitude, we lost longitude. We had to have both. We were between 40° and 50° South and 100° and 120° West. We had to get to 58° South and 70° West. We meandered about the ocean, hopelessly, sometimes in fog and sometimes gale. We encountered no conditions that were pleasant.

Now we had also the worry of Walker's death. Working aloft is not dangerous, in the ordinary course of events, if nothing goes wrong and you do not think about it. It seems dangerous enough, to those who conjure up, from comfortable easy chairs ashore, visions of shivering sailors fighting desperately with some mad sail upon the reeling yards of a sailing ship, driving and plunging in a gale. But if you are accustomed to it there is little danger—*so long as you do not think about it.* You require not strong nerves, but no nerves at all. When you have seen someone killed up on those yards it is different. You do get nerves, after that. You see always

the yard where he was killed, whenever you lay into the rigging. You cannot help but think about it, and about him. It is bad for the nerves. You find yourself at the very place where he was killed, working on that very yard, handling that very sail . . . It is very bad for the nerves.

Everybody felt it, deeply, although they did not say much about it. Getting in the mizzen upper tops'l one day the sail flung two of the boys' hands out and they nearly went from the yard; they kept their balance miraculously and flung their hands again over the jackstay. Ordinarily one would laugh at an incident like that, common enough in the day's work. But I saw that they turned very white, and were thoughtful afterwards when we had come down on deck again. We had still to go aloft, of course, after Walker had been killed. We had to carry on. The constant battle to get our ship around the Horn had to go on, with its never-ending work, its making fast of sail and setting it again, and sending down blown-out sails and bending new ones, its ceaseless round of watch and watch and constant wet misery. As the days dragged themselves by we found ourselves living for nothing but to be past Cape Horn. Only let us come to there! we prayed; afterwards it does not matter. Afterwards we may forget, and think of other things. Afterwards sunshine will come and gales will pass, and we shall feel that we are bound to England. We forgot, down there, that there was a place called England. We were bound only to Cape Horn . . .

We saw that the t'gallant halliards, where they had carried away, were quite rotten. The yarns could be

pulled to pieces easily in one's fingers; the rope was rotten right through, with the guano. Guano has a very bad effect on canvas and running gear, and the rope looked all right to the outward glance. New rope was bent warily in the ship, of course, but the mates looked after her as well as they could with the gear they had. No one could see that the halliard was faulty. It looked all right. It had been taken out not long before, tested, and the end turned. Nothing could be discovered amiss then, although everybody knew, of course, that it was not new. There were worse lines in the ship, and worse wires. The mizzen upper tops'l halliards, for example, were very much older than the fore t'gall'nt. They had been doing duty at the main for two years before they were shifted to the mizzen. The second mate had been four years in the ship, and he said that those halliards were old when he came aboard. They were still doing duty when I left, and though we were careful with them, they never gave any sign of carrying away. Other lines had carried away before the halliards went. They always do. The night before he was killed, Walker was helping to clew up the crojack when the inner buntline carried away while the sailmaker, French Peter, and he were swinging on it, and the three of them went hurtling down the lee poop ladder.

It was a curious thing, too, that two of the crew had been in dismasted ships previously, and nobody had been killed. Bergqvist was in the *Fennia* when she was dismasted off Cape Horn, and the sailmaker was in the *Hougomont* when she was dismasted in the North Atlantic while bound to Melbourne in 1928. In both these ships the yards and all the gear came suddenly hurtling down

on deck about the crew's ears, yet no one was seriously hurt, by some miracle. With us one yard fell down upon its lifts. I was forgetting to record that the mate also had been through a dismasting, in the famous four-master *Dundee*. He was a young man, about twenty-eight. All the crew were young, but they had been through some experiences.

The first few days after Walker's death were particularly trying. The most curious thing was that one could not bring oneself, having known him so long and in such different circumstances, to believe that he really was dead. One found oneself, when some little thing happened that was worth repeating, making a mental note to tell Walker that; with a ghastly start, one remembered that one could not ever tell him anything. After a while one became used to the fact that he was not there, aboard the ship; but it was more difficult to grasp that he was no longer anywhere. We had shared a little cabin, and his place there was steeped with his personality. It was queer to come in there those gloomy days and gale-filled nights, and stretch out in oilskins on one's sodden bunk and think. It was useless to contemplate undressing and sleeping; how could one, when everything was wet? I kept the oil lamp dully glowing, the first few nights; I don't know exactly why. Perhaps I didn't like to be alone in the darkness, with the noise of the smashing seas and the crying wind. . . . After some days we divided out his sea clothes among those who had none—Beckman, Finila, Bergqvist, Jim, and the rest, who were shockingly poorly clad for that ghastliness. Before he died we had told these youths to come along to us when they wanted

things, and we would give them what we could, having more clothes than they, although not many suitable garments for those latitudes. They rarely came. Finila preferred to stay wet; I don't know how he stood it all.

Now that Walker was dead they accepted something; it was what he would have liked done, I was sure. The usual thing, when a sailor is killed, is that his clothes and all his belongings are collected, an inventory made, and they are sold at auction round the main mast. In this case it was different. The value of the clothes wasn't much. Nobody wanted money for them. They were not worth taking back from England to Tasmania; his people, I thought, might have liked his other clothes—the clothes that they had known him in—but they would not want the sea gear. Those boys had no money to bid for clothes at an auction, or for anything else. They had the poorest wages. Thirty shillings a month or so was all they had, and that was nothing. It scarcely bought them cigarettes out of the slopchest. No, there was never any thought of the traditional auction sale; it would have seemed all wrong looking back on what he was and thinking of what he would have wished. It was difficult to persuade the boys to take what was left, despite their crying need of it; but they were deeply grateful.

I was often glad to remember, during those days, a little incident of the day before Walker died. It was a miserably wretched day, but bore no distinction for that. He was understandably beginning to be fed up with the life, a little—or not with the life, since that had a strong appeal to him, but with the long-drawn run to the Horn against the east winds. Everything was so wet in the

cabin that it was quite hopeless to do anything about it. We had tried to photograph a little, and the camera had jammed. Then when, after long work, we cleared the film the light metre showed that further photography was impossible. There had been pea soup for dinner, burnt. He hated pea soup. All our reading matter—books and magazines—had been reduced to a mass of pulp by the sea; there was nowhere to keep it out of the reach of the water. We were on allowance of oil for the lamp, and could have no light to read in the cabin.

It was not to be wondered at, perhaps, that he was somewhat fed up with it all. So was I, but because I knew that this was all a phase which would pass, and had seen it pass before, it was not so bad for me. It was all so overpoweringly depressing that it was hard for him to believe, temporarily, that anything better existed in all the world.

I decided that I would do something about it. We had a can of honey in our cabin, caulked up against the sea. A friend in Adelaide, a bee-farmer by profession, gave it to us before we set out. I went into the galley, and made some toast by the simple means of cutting some hunks of bread and laying them on the hot top of the stove until they burnt enough to pass for toast. We were not particular. It was a dispensation from the cook to be allowed there. I spread honey on the toast. It was a Friday, and the cook had also made some cake—poor, rough mixture, in shore eyes (it was nothing but some flour, a very little sugar, a pinch of baking powder, and some doubtful margarine) but grand to us. I got from the cook our whacks of this, and made some cocoa with

cocoa that we had. When the cook was not looking I put in some milk. Then with this great feast I made my way, carefully dodging the seas, round to our cabin and knocked on the door because I could not get in. He opened it, and forgot all his depression when he saw what I had—two mugs of cocoa with milk in it, two pieces of toast with honey on them, and the cook's cake. We sat down at the little table, chocking ourselves up with our knees that we might not be dislodged by the ship's heavy labouring, and enjoyed the feast. He was very pleased.

It was a little thing, but the next day he died.

It was the last food we had together, and I liked afterwards to remember the pleasure that it brought him. . . .

I looked at Walker's log, one of these days. He had always read to me from it as he wrote; it was very interesting. I saw that he had titled it, ominously: "*Grace Harwar's* Voyage: Wallaroo towards ——." In the last entry he had recorded that the long-drawn, trying run to the Horn was beginning to get on his nerves. He had not sailed along that road before, and it was hard for him to believe that sunshine and better days lay around the corner. I told him many times, when we were wet through and shivering; I preached always that we had only to round the Horn and troubles were shed from us, like a snake's skin.

The last entry was unfinished; there were ideas for half a dozen short stories, on one page at the back.

"It is a wonderful experience," he wrote a few days before the end, "though horribly and cruelly miserable. The wind has veered to the south'ard, coming straight

from the ice of the South Pole, bringing rain and that fiend of all fiends—sleet—with it. I was aloft on the main mast an hour to-day and my hands were so cold that coming down I could hardly hold on to the rigging. When I touched anything, I could not feel it, yet all the time my hands were burning as if they had been scalded. . . . I fight on against things which seem unbearable, all the while wondering why I don't give in. I don't because I can't. Nobody does; it isn't done in these ships, or they would never come to port. And yet I would love to! I had no idea what pain—real pain—was until I came here; no one could possibly imagine, without signing before the mast for a Cape Horn winter's voyage, how these lovely and graceful ships drag one, immerse one, and perpetually stifle one in the very dregs of hell. . . . And yet I'm glad I'm here, in spite of everything. There is only one Cape Horn, thank God, and it does not last all the way to England."

From the fortieth day to the forty-ninth day, we had no fair wind. At the very most, I had not expected a run of more than seven weeks to the Horn. Yet on the forty-ninth day we had still a long road to sail and no fair wind to send us ramping over it. "The lee rail is under water frequently and the deck filled from rail to rail," I read in my log for May 27, the fortieth day at sea. "There is half a gale from the south'ard with the ship down to lower tops'ls; holding the mains'l, however, to make a bit of longitude and get to the Horn. The foc'sle and galley are awash and all is wet and misery. The wind has all the refrigerated agony of the ice in it, and drives the

spray high into our rigging; it moans and snarls horribly, and everyone is downcast and depressed. The long voyage stretches out interminably and there does not seem much that is good upon the earth . . . Poor Finila, as if he had not yet been wet through enough on deck, was quite soaked to the skin by a heavy sea which burst through the foc'sle skylight over him as he sat at his breakfast."

Upon the next day: "Cold, blinding rain squalls drive at us continuously and it is pretty miserable. The wind has dropped something and a little sail is set again; we are losing latitude now but making a bit of longitude out of it. Daily it grows colder in bitter stages, and the arc of the disappearing sun is less and less. . . . Walker was good aloft and careful. He was healthy and in a splendid state; despite the many wretched factors of the long-drawn run to the Horn he was filling out; and he liked the life. He would not return to it, of course—for what would be the use?—but he was glad he had come. . . . We bent, with all hands, a new main upper tops'l in the rain."

The forty-second, forty-third, forty-fourth, forty-fifth, forty-sixth days showed no improvement: "Going close by the wind drifting about four points to the nor'ard of our course, and the wind shows no signs of changing. It is pretty rotten to be in such a ship as this, dirty of bottom and sluggishly sullen with the yards on the backstays, under such conditions. But we must have patience . . . Captain Svensson said the other day, just before Walker was killed, that it was curious, with this crew, that he never heard an angry word or a vile expression about the decks;

SHIPPING A SEA!

A SEA SMASHING ABOARD THE
GRACE HARWAR

his experience with another crowd of Australians, shipped out of Port Augusta, in 1927, had been very different! Nobody did swear here much, and we were a happy band despite our passing troubles. And now—." And again: "We had to wear ship at noon but didn't get much better out of her on the other tack. Everybody has forgotten about Falmouth . . . Before going about we had lost latitude to about 46°, and hadn't gained much longitude either. We had neither given her sail nor taken any off; it isn't any use. . . ." On the day following: "I have gained some false solace from these preceding days by persuading myself that the conditions could not possibly become any worse. I was wrong; they have. We are becalmed to-day, with scarcely a breath of wind, teeming rain, and a ghastly huge sea flinging the ship in all directions. Without the pressure of the wind to steady her she rolls as if her masts would fall overboard; it is a wonder that they don't. Perhaps they will, later on."

And so the story drags on, with monotonous similarity. "Fog, rain, and rotten cold, and the wind has hauled ahead again. Damn! . . . Midnight finds us down to six tops'ls and the fores'l, with a dirty sky, a falling glass, and the promise of a wind change." On the next day: "The wind *did* change, but unfortunately not for long. About 5 A.M. it came out of the nor'west, with every appearance of a blow, and at long last we thought we had the westerlies. But it had gone again before sundown and at midnight we are by the wind, once more wandering on slowly off our course . . ." "Still we make little progress towards Cape Horn. The wind is from ENE. and NE., strong, with a howl in it, and constant,

utterly exasperating rain. If it didn't rain the cold would not be so bad . . . Who would go again in sailing ships?"

We came to the fiftieth day, June 6, by which I had reckoned that we would be past the Horn, come what might. We had still nine hundred miles to go. It was maddening; but what could we do about it? Nothing; only go on. We discovered in ourselves a kind of sullen endurance, a morbid fatalism, a capacity for standing up to the frigid horror of the passing weeks we had not thought it possible to possess; a kind of grim interest, so to speak, in seeing how far fate could try us. We weren't dead, anyway. Beckman said once that if he were to be killed, he hoped he would go like Walker went. The passing days deepened our depression, until we came to believe that we should not come to Cape Horn, ever. . . . Well, we would see.

Often the only thing that prevented the decks from becoming filled with snow was the fact that as soon as the snow came the sea washed it off again. The deck was never steady, never dry. The snow had no chance to lie.

Looking back on it, it must have been a pretty miserable business. One remembers that we did not care to change our under garments, wet through as they were, because as soon as we took them off and put them down, they froze. It was better to leave them on, and put up with it. We had no dry ones, nor was there any chance to dry anything. . . . Cold reached the stage where it was no longer discomfort, but acute pain. It was not merely uncomfortable to go for one's trick to the wheel in the middle of a sodden, raining night; it was sickening torture. We sought solace in the reflection that there

could surely be no torments of hell reserved for those who sailed in square-rigged ships, round the Horn in winter. If there was a hell, it was warm. We would have welcomed it.

With the thermometer at four or five Fahrenheit, a living gale blowing from the ice-wastes of the Antarctic not many miles away, a great murderous sea running, foam-topped and angry; and the old ship battling on against the east winds and the snow flurries, day after day, week after week, fighting always, winning little, swept end to end by the great seas, weighed down with water that turned to ice where it touched her steel, sails blown bodily from their gaskets at times, and ripped to their bolt-ropes where they stood upon more than one black night—it was scarcely a holiday! It was near enough to hell for us.

Aloft it was not so bad, though it was torture getting there and clewing the sails up from the deck was beset with danger and surrounded by immense difficulties, with the seas that swept aboard and the gear that carried away. But aloft you were fighting something; there came the call of adventure to your bones. You fought on. You forgot the cold and the shrieking wind that cut through you. You only handled the murderous sails, and fought to get them in, forgetting all else—even your foothold. Often aloft your hands are torn; wet strong canvas, with the demon of the gale in it, easily tears out the nails. We kept our nails well clipped but sometimes they went, for all that. Here was found some advantage of the frightful cold: your hands were so numbed that you did not feel anything, at the moment. You

looked down at your bloody hands in dumb surprise. You saw the blood streaking over the wet canvas, so impregnated with salt that the red streamed over it, not staining the white; you looked, after a while and the sail was fast, and saw also that the tops of a finger or two on your right hand were in a mess. You looked at the fingers queerly. They didn't hurt, so long as there was the exhilaration of the gale and the struggle with the sail. But afterwards! . . .

But aloft it was not so bad. Let the rain soak down on you and the hail cut in, the gale shriek and the sail bellow madly; you fought the sail and you did your job, and then came down again. But at the wheel you just stood there and suffered. Protection there was none. The rain and the hail swept round you, the great seas raging astern came racing by, missing the poop and you by a very narrow margin; everything on you was wet, and clammy, and nasty. You were so used to the job of steering the ship, even in weather like that, that the effort of it was insufficient to occupy the mind and force back the miseries of rain and gale; you just stood there, and suffered on. And when the trick was done and you were relieved, you went for'ard for a while with the knowledge that soon, still wet, still frozen, still tortured almost to madness by the ghastly cold, you would be there again. . . . And for how long? That was the greatest torture. For how long?

You didn't know. Nobody did. You just went on.

And daily the conditions became doubly worse. The ship drove on her way farther and farther south, the sun retreated farther and farther from the cold horizon.

From 10 A.M. until 2, it described an anæmic arc in the grey sky. We had to take even that for granted. We never saw it.

One of these wretched days, Jim came into the cabin, carefully closing the ill-fitting door behind him to keep out the rest of the sea, and sat down on the low bench that ran 'thwartships across from the bunks to the little locker. He carefully chocked himself off there so that the rolling of the ship would not dislodge him.

"What do you think of this?" he asked, waving a highly coloured little booklet that must have come from some tourist agency or something, though the foc'sle of the *Grace Harwar* was a curious place for travel "literature." He read from it: "Nowhere can the delights of cruising be more fully enjoyed than aboard the —— There is an unusual amount of deck space for games and recreation, and, in addition, the sports arena of 5,000 square feet provides a well-equipped gymnasium, squash rackets court and a palatial swimming pool. There are two dining saloons, a delightfully cool Spanish smoking room, a card room, a writing room, and two enclosed sunny garden lounges. The bedrooms are large and daintily furnished; hot and cold water is provided, and many of them have private bathrooms. Everywhere on board there is a sense of spaciousness and comfort, combining the atmosphere of a home and a luxurious country club."

"Hell," said Roy, who was there reading, "an' I suppose they reckon they go to sea."

A green sea, sweeping over the weather rail, smashed against the steel walls of the foc'sle and splintered one

of the glass ports; water streamed through the leaking skylight and the deckhead, and oozed inches deep about the floor, carrying a loose sea-chest with it. The gale howled; even inside it was freezing. Bunks were wet, and bedclothes. It was impossible to sleep, to get warm, to do anything . . . "The bedrooms are large and daintily furnished . . . There is a sense of spaciousness and comfort, combining the atmosphere of a home and a luxurious country club."

Jim was so overcome by his contempt that for once he had no comment . . .

And then upon the fifty-first day—*mirabile dictu!*—there came a west wind. It began by moaning softly through the rigging; the glass went down steadily. We hesitated to record the fact that the west wind had come, for fear it leave again. We were rather pessimistic by then. But it did stay, with a vengeance. It freshened throughout the day; we began to get sail off her again—how often does one man-handle canvas along that road!—and shortened her down, sail after sail. We set the main upper t'gallants'l when the fair wind first came, with some thought of driving her, in a mild way. We knew she wouldn't drive, of course, but the psychological effect was not to be ignored. We wanted to feel that we were making as much of that wind as possible. A little later it became evident that she could not stand that extra sail, small as it was; it blew out. Then we made it fast, what was left of it; we made fast also the lower t'gallants, the mizzen upper tops'l, the outer and inner jibs. Then we had the crojack and mains'l in—the crojack long since, of course—and set to work on the fore upper tops'l. It

was no fun getting that sail in. The night had come again then; it was all hands on deck, of course—had been all day, and pretty frequently before that. We averaged little sleep down there—maybe four hours a night, if that, and then it was better called stupor.

There was an icy bite in the screaming air, and aloft it was almost frightening; a buntline or two carried away, and the sail was frozen stiff. Jim had two of his fingernails torn out but didn't notice it until hours afterwards, when they began to thaw.

We were three hours on that upper tops'l yard, and when we came from there, there was the main tops'l to come in as well. There was no rest! We did not mind so much as long as the west wind held, but we were still inclined to be pessimistic about that. We had looked forward, the whole weary way, to some opportunity of getting the ship down to the shortest of storm canvas and letting her go. It wouldn't matter how hard the wind blew, so long as it was fair. We had been seeking that opportunity for nearly two months, then, in vain.

But now it had come. There was ice along the footropes and in the rigging, where the spray drove. The wind now screamed with a mad note; it whipped up the sullen sea into a foaming madness; it howled ghoulishly about the fighting ship, as if it were screaming at us, "Now I've got you, by thunder! Now I've got you!"

We thought it had, sometimes, as the night wore on.

It became evident early that we were in for the blow of the voyage—a regular Cape Horn hurricane. There were two to the wheel now, lashed there. They did not look back. There was no lookout on the foc'sle head, be-

cause anyone who went there would have been washed overboard. The seas came over there bodily, green. They came over the main deck even worse. The foc'sle was given over to them; it was impossible for anybody to remain in the for'ard house, even if we had had the leisure to go in there. There were life-lines of stout wire rigged along the main-deck, as there had been since the first night out from Wallaroo, but more than they were necessary to pass along that way in safety. The seas poured aboard, in one unceasing stream; the deck never cleared. The ship rolled, and staggered, and lurched, and drove blindly on, lightless, without a lookout, steered by straining boys, conned by mates and master, themselves a little more than boys. The weather became so bad that no one could pass along the main deck; we were summoned to stand-by aft, on the poop, where there was no shelter —not even a small charthouse, such as most sailing ships carry, nor a whale-back wheelhouse. The *Grace Harwar* had nothing on her poop but an open wheel, the cabin skylight and companion, and a capstan. Aft by the helmsmen, changed every hour, the captain and the officer of the watch stood, conning the ship; in the narrow space between the cabin companion and the bole of the mizzen mast all hands were gathered.

There we spent the night, descending now and again into the maelstrom of murderous seas of the main deck to attend to something or other, to set an extra lashing about a spare spar, which was working adrift, to rescue some of the gear that had been washed out through a washport, to replace the tarpaulin that was lashed about the hencoop beneath the skids. One's life was in one's

hands, whenever one went down the poop ladder; we went warily. The seas piled aboard so heavily that often it was impossible to see the rails; the screaming of the wind grew in intensity, until even the very sea itself grew afraid of it. We had put out oil bags over either bow, to let some oil drip on to the sea and soften it a little. For a while this worked with more or less efficiency; then all the oil was gone, and we could not get for'ard to put out more.

The world seemed to have gone mad utterly. The sea was now running worse than I had ever seen it before, or the captain; we hoped that she would stay before it, and not broach to. We meant to get the fores'l in, but with so few of us we were such a while on the tops'ls that by the time we were ready to begin with the fores'l it was too late. We dared not start the sheets; we let her go, and hoped that nothing would carry away. It would be a famous run, if only she lived through it.

We had no reason to fear that she would not do that . . .

A little after midnight—the hours dragged abominably—it became evident that she was not rising to the seas so well. She did not seem to be making the same efforts to free herself of the water; her bows went under more of the seas, and her sides scooped up the water more heavily. The ship, too, seemed more sluggish in her movements. She seemed not to care so much whether she lived or died. She still rose to the seas, and stumbled on in a boiling, seething, circle of insane foam. She still answered the helm, with worrying slowness.

The mizzen stays'l blew out. We let it go. There

was nothing but the boltrope left inside two minutes.

The captain was beginning to be a little more worried about her. She ought to have been behaving better; she was a good old sea warrior, the old *Grace Harwar*, and had weathered worse blows than that upon a hundred occasions. He shouted to the carpenter to sound the wells.

Hours afterwards the carpenter returned.

"She's leaking," he said. "There's ten inches of water in the well."

There was nothing we could do about it.

Sailing ships are primitive. They have no power. There is no means of doing anything in them, except by hand. The *Grace Harwar* had no mechanical aids. If she was leaking, the only way to check the leak was to pump her by hand. The pumps were out in the main deck, in the main fife-rail, right in the wettest and most dangerous part of the ship. We could not go there; we would have been swept overboard. We could not find the leak. God knew where that was. We could not heave the ship to, and try to control the leak afterwards; she had run before the storm too long, and now there was nothing to do but carry on.

Well, we were in for it.

The word that she was leaking was passed around. No orders were given. There was nothing to do. We did not know how seriously she might have been affected; we knew that on the previous voyage up from Australia one of the plates went, ever so little, and for the rest of the voyage the watches had to pump her every day. And now it was impossible to pump at all. We had

simply to wait until the weather cleared and we could go out again on the main deck.

The hours dragged by so slowly that we thought the day was not coming. We knew there was a chance that it would not come for us. Well, we were pretty tired; we were not greatly concerned. Beckman slept a little. So did Finila, though he was wet through. They woke up with a start, now and again, all but frozen. They did not care what happened to them, or to the ship. They had stood enough. They were only children, after all, and had been called upon to stand a fair amount. It seems curious to believe afterwards, perhaps, but when we learnt that the ship was leaking our first thoughts were of gratitude that we did not have to go out and pump. That was hell! We were worked almost to death, frozen, tired, sleepless, not properly fed, depressed by the events of the voyage, dulled by the long, long weeks of ghastly beating against the head winds. We had reached a state of mind in which nothing much mattered; whatever happened to us there, we did not expect any good.

We did not discuss anything. I don't think that we would have even if we had been able to hear each other's voices above the wind . . . There seemed now a murderous satisfaction in the screaming of the wind and the wild play of the sea about the decks; the helmsmen, grim-faced, spun the wheel hard this way and hard that, trying desperately to keep her on something like her course. The wind showed no sign of going down, and the sea rose. We looked out over the furiously contorted sea; it looked a pretty ghastly kind of a place to die in . . . The boats? What use were they! There were but two,

lashed down on the after skids, unprepared for a voyage. It was waste of time to think of them. We could not have launched one, if we had tried; and then it could never have lived five minutes, in a sea like that.

No, we could do nothing—just absolutely nothing.

Looking back now, it is difficult to catch again the sullen spirit of that night, the dullness of heart and of mind that enabled us to go on, not much concerned. We did not know whether the ship would sink or float. We hoped for the latter, of course, with what spirit we could muster; if the former were to be our fate, well, we would be delivered out of our misery.

The daylight came, after months, and the ship still ran on before the gale.

CHAPTER IX

FIFTY-SEVEN DAYS

ONCE, during the night, the Captain fought his way aft through the hurricane to me at the wheel. He shouted something with all the power of his lungs.

"What else could you expect?" he said. "What else could you expect, when the poor old lady has a motor car down the main hatch and a motion picture camera in the foc'sle!"

The motor car was his own—a saloon car that he had picked up in Wilmington, when the ship was there, and was now carrying home to Finland. The motion picture camera was, of course, mine. Well, perhaps these things were in the nature of affronts to this lovely old ship with a soul, unused to mechanical things and the soulless creations of later days. He smiled about it, but sailors are very superstitious. We had remembered before, when Walker died, that we set out with thirteen; we remembered also all those black albatrosses.

But affronted or not, the ship fought on. She did not give in. She never weakened in her stride. She did not let us down, shorn of her figurehead as she was, laden down with a motor car, made the "star" of a motion picture; leaking, and sore pressed. She carried on, and so did we—though not with her spirit. We had no spirit; we didn't care.

After the day came the weather improved slightly. At any rate we thought it did. Probably it didn't really. But the light makes a great difference—even the dull gloom that passes for light away down there, beyond 50 South. We went out on to the main deck, and tried to man the pumps. The ship still ran on. We were able to put a little more oil from the bows; the cook boiled some coffee. God knows how he managed it; all his galley was washed out and his coal was lying in puddles on the cemented floor. The cement was torn up in parts by the force of the water. We poured the coffee down our necks when it came; I don't remember that we thought of thanking the cook.

We found that the pumps were jammed. They wouldn't work. There was sixteen inches of water in the hold, and more coming in.

Still, sixteen inches wasn't so much. She wouldn't sink, if she developed no further leaks. We were not pessimistic.

Sailing ships' pumps are the most primitive and appalling appliances imaginable. They are situated in the wettest part of the decks, worked by all hands swinging on the handle bars of two huge fly-wheels and heaving them around. Work! You heave on those bars for hours, before the pumps begin to suck; it is ghastly work even when the pumps are drawing. And now they would not work at all. There was no need to be unduly worried, although this succession of calamities was getting rather on one's nerves, on top of the sleepless night and the worrying weeks. The seas were sweeping across the decks so heavily that it was dangerous to remain there, but

we had to open the top of a ventilator warily, and then the carpenter, with a hurricane lamp, climbed down into the bowels of the ship to get at the rose boxes of the pumps, in the bilge, and clear them if he could. The top of the ventilator was clamped down on him as he disappeared. He went down entirely unconcerned. It would have been a filthy and rotten job even in port, but he managed it. He cleared the rose boxes by scooping out from them with his hands the conglomeration of wet wheat which had fouled in them, and climbed up into the air again.

We began to pump. It was difficult, with the ship's heavy rolling. When she rolled one way the lee pumps did not draw; when she fell back the other way, the axle of the flywheels slipped a little in its bed, with a jerk, and the bars all but came off. It was an all-hands' job, of course. The starboard watch was on the starboard side, the port watch on the port. In the beginning there was some attempt at chanteying, which soon failed. We needed all our spirit—all our breath, indeed—to pump. Hour after hour went by with no alteration. It was freezingly cold; there was ice in the scuppers. Yet our bodies were streaming wet with perspiration and our faces steamed. The palms of our hands began to wear away, with the constant friction on the steel handle-bars. The seas washed about us to the waist, sometimes right over us. We did not think of trying to get out of their way. What was the use? We were wet through and through, as wet and cold and frozen as we could possibly be. We couldn't be washed away, because we were lashed there. The ship rolled and the washports clanged; the wind

screamed and the seas roared and thundered; the spume flew right over the t'gallant yards, and the ship seemed to be racing on in a cloud of shrieking foam. We were glad of the short respite of our wheel tricks, away from the accursed pumps. After six hours the water was down to thirteen inches, which wasn't so bad. We had the leak under control, anyway. It was nothing serious.

And the west wind blew on . . . We were on our course! It was splendid; it looked at last as if we were really on the way to round Cape Horn.

It was not until nearly four o'clock in the afternoon that one of us went overboard.

It was so simple! It was a wonder it hadn't happened long before. It is the easiest thing on earth, to be swept overboard from the decks of a heavily running sailing ship, deep-laden, hard pressed by the sea and the wind. The ship scoops up a hundred tons of water over her lee rail. Then she lifts up that rail, and rolls the water murderously down to the other side, dipping that under the water also. You are on the weather side, caught crossing the deck; you might be hanging to the life-line, but it doesn't matter much. If the sea is very heavy that won't save you. You are knocked down. And then you go slipping and sliding helplessly about the decks, and the sea empties you out, before you can help yourself, over the ship's immersed rail. What is there to save you? What can you do? Lots of things, you might think, if you have only to think about it. But you would find that there is nothing, were you there.

That was what happened. The boy went so easily that

at first we had not realised he was gone. The sea came—a great brute, green and grey, glittering and glinting right through—he was clinging to the life-line on the weather side, just abaft the main rigging, in the narrow open space on the fore part of the skids. We thought he was safe, hanging to the life-line. We were thunderstruck when we looked afterwards, and he was not there. The others of us were about the fife-rail, and we leapt high into the stays and on the whips of the crojack braces there, out of the way of the weight of the water. We clung there like monkeys, waiting for it to clear. It was in a moment of spell from the pumps, when we had cast adrift the lashings. The wind had gone down a great deal by then, and there was talk of setting the main tops'l. But the sea was still running savagely high.

It looked, on the face of it, as if this second life was gone as well. The Captain was on the poop and saw what happened; so did the helmsmen, shivering there. So did the mate, with his watchful eye never leaving the deck. The Captain flung a life-belt overboard from the poop. He saw the oilskinned figure rise, a little astern of the ship, and grasp the logline trailing there. The ship was running on heavily, making about six knots, maybe, and the drag of the logline pulled the poor fellow's head under the water. He would have drowned if he had clung there. He kept his nerve, despite the apparent nearness of his end, and seeing the life-belt floating by, let go the logline and struck out a few strokes for the belt. We saw that he caught it, and put his head through . . . It was so cold that he would die of exposure if he were left there long. What could we do?

It was dangerous to try to bring the ship to, in a sea like that. The seas would sweep her from end to end; the wind would catch the sails aback. Would her rigging stand it? Could the poor old ship, noble and splendidly game as she was, stand up to the added strain? Captain Svensson never hesitated a moment about anything: "Down helm!" he roared, the instant that the figure, tossed high by the heaving waters, swept by the poop. And down helm it was; the ship came slowly into the wind. The seas swept her decks, but they did no damage. She was carrying little sail; the rigging creaked frighteningly, and the masts groaned. But they stood. . . . Looking back, it was taking a big chance to bring the ship into the wind then. It was almost looking for disaster. Some shipmasters would not have tried it. But ours tried; and he won.

That was only the beginning. There were no falls rove in the davits, and the boats could not be swung out. The two boats aft were lashed down on their skids, and lashed again. Huge manila lines had been passed around them fore and aft, and tightened down with spare capstan bars, and frapped about and lashed again, so that the boats would not shift with the ship's heavy working nor be washed away with the seas. There were no falls rove because it was not thought that they would be needed. In the ordinary course of events, they are not; and the new rope that would be required for them was very much more needed for other purposes. There was not so very much new rope in the ship . . .

Was anyone ever in a more hopeless predicament? Washed away from a heavy running ship, below 50 South,

in a big sea and bad weather, with boats that could not be used? It looked as if it was absolutely hopeless even to think of saving that boy's life. Maybe it was, too; but we had to try.

We smashed in the caulked-up door of the sail locker, in the poop, and slashed away the Cape Horn lashings of the port boat with an axe. While some of the boys saw to rowlocks and oars and flung out of the boat all superfluous gear—water barrel, air tanks, biscuit cask, mast, sails—others dragged out new coils of rope from the sail locker and hastily rove off falls. No one was excited. Nobody lost his head. I never thought such coolness was possible; but if anything were to be of use now, coolness must prevail. The mate, strong-featured and with little to say, took charge of the actual preparations of the boat. One would have thought it was a little boat drill we were embarking on, in pleasant weather, to look at him. Efficiency and speed; he was perfect—not a command too many, not a raised shout once, not a word when it was not necessary; he said what it was necessary to say, at the right time, quietly. He gave such a splendid example that no one could be flustered. On the poop near by the Captain looked on, watchful; now and again he swept a glance back into the murk astern, and at the weather. The lee helmsman was gone to the mizzen top, whence he could still see the floating boy, not far away.

The weather, which was temporarily a little better, looked as if it might become much worse again at any moment. This was no part of the ocean to fool about in boats! There was a rain squall coming down, to blot out everything. Night was approaching.

Inside seven minutes the boat was swung out. The cover had been ripped off; everything was ready. The boat was over the side, ready to be lowered into the water when a chance came. The seas washed so high that they lifted it, at times; but there was not the same driving force in them now. The ship lay sluggish in the water, rolling heavily. There came an ominous creaking and groaning from the rigging.

The mate stepped into the after end of the boat. The Captain said the names of those who were to go, in a quiet voice. There was no need to call for volunteers; everyone was ready—every boy, with no exception, although they all knew what it meant and they were all pretty tired. They went to their places, six of them. The others stood by to lower the boat, when the Captain gave the word. We had to be careful about that, lest she be stove in by crashing against the ship's rolling sides, and everybody spilled into the sea and helplessly drowned. We waited until she rolled that side down into the water and the sea skimmed almost to the bottom of the boat. "Now!" shouted the Captain. The falls gave way rapidly; the boat rode in the sea; the tackle-blocks were flung hurriedly from the hooks fore and aft in the boat; we pushed off and were away before that side rolled into view again. It was quick work. Almost instantly the ship had gone. She lay there, high above us now as the boat sank in the trough of the sea, looking curiously strange when one was accustomed for so long to know her only from the view-point of her own decks. *Grace Harwar, Mariehamn,* we read on the counter; that name

meant something, by then. The green moss came into view on her under-sides, as she rolled.

It began to rain. There was a nasty low howling in the wind, though it was not then very strong. The sea was tremendous, seen from that tiny boat; yet she rode it splendidly and there was no fear attached to the management of her. We were too much concerned with the chances of saving the one who had gone to worry about ourselves. We knew that they were faint; faint, faint indeed . . . We were almost without hope. And yet we had to try; he was not so far away, if he still floated. And if he clung to the life-belt, he would float.

The mate stood there aft, with a huge steering oar; I don't know how he kept his balance. Now the boat fell deep into a trough, and there was nothing save walls of foam-soaked green around. Now she was flung high on a crest, up and up until we thought she was going to take to the air; even upon the crests of the highest waves, the horizon was bounded by the third sea. We could not see far; never further than three seas away. In the troughs we could not see at all—not even the ship. The boys strained to their oars; the sailmaker, grim countenanced; the boyish Hägert and Sjöberg; French Peter and Filimon, coats flung off, soaked to the skin, worried, not saying anything. The mate said nothing but looked to the life of the boat. He glanced hard into the wind, when we rose on a sea. It looked ugly. It was already dusk, and the night was coming rapidly down. The Captain had shouted to us a direction to steer when we left the ship, but we did not know where the boy was. We

had no idea, in that heaving waste. We did not know how to begin to look for him . . .

We remembered that the ship had been running before the wind, and steered back into it. We saw nothing. We tried to follow the oiliness of the ship's wake, where her disturbing foam still left a trace upon the waters. But the trace was faint, and was soon gone. There was no hope in that direction. We tried to watch some albatrosses, circling round, in the hope that they would circle over the figure in the life-belt—if it still was there!—but they came, screaming, and circled over us. Moments passed, and we saw nothing. It came on to rain much more heavily; the light was nearly gone from the sky now. It looked as if a heavy squall were coming down. We dare not go too far from the ship. We were a little too far already. What could we do, if a squall came down and shut her out? Would we find her again? It was not so very likely. It had happened before, at sea, that boats had put out after people washed overboard, and all had gone . . . We gave no thought to things like that. The boys grunted at the oars; the mate scanned the seas eagerly. I never saw such a picture of splendid efficiency and glorious coolness in my life, nor heard of one. He knew the chances, well enough. He saw the squall coming down, and the darkness. He knew that not only the half-drowned wretch in the life-belt—if he still was there—was in danger. And yet he did not give in. He never at any moment even betrayed anxiety. He smiled! He swung the steering oar, this way and that, and now and then quietly exhorted the boys. There was no air of hopelessness about him, no faintest sign of

despair. He struck no note of worry; we might have been upon a fishing trip, in quiet and sheltered waters.

I admit quite candidly that I had long since given up hope of rescuing that boy. What hope was there? I waited for the mate to signify that he, too, was throwing it in. We had not by then the foggiest notion of which direction to steer. The ship was over a mile away.

He did not give in. We kept on . . . And then in the last moment of diffused light, we saw him! Not four boat's lengths away! It was a miracle, if there ever was one. We had been bound towards him all the time, and had had no faintest idea.

We raced down to the life-belt and took him aboard, carefully, over the stern sheets for fear the boat would capsize. He was quite unconscious, and frozen almost stiff. We flung all the coats we had over him; French Peter tried to bring back some circulation as we pulled back to the ship, which had swung round a little to the wind now and was coming down to us.

Everybody was amazed when we brought him back aboard. He was given up for dead—gone hopelessly. As it was, he was pretty far gone; but he lived. There is iron in the bodies of these sailing ships' boys, and in their spirits, treasure without worldly synonym. He would have died if he had not been hardened by the previous hell. He could do no work for a fortnight. It might have been longer than that . . .

We were glad beyond words that we had saved this life. One was enough to lose—too much. We felt again that somebody was interested in us, that the hatred and fury of the sea did not wholly comprise our world. After

fifty days of the Cape Horn road, in winter time, one might understandably be depressed enough, even if there has not been also something of tragedy.

The westerly wind held, thank God, and we sailed on. The ship was so dirty that she could not run more than two hundred miles or so in the twenty-four hours; only once in the whole long voyage did she do more than two hundred. We were satisfied if she ran eight knots. That was good enough, in all the circumstances; it was fine to have the yards off the backstays and to run on, finished with that heartbreaking, miserable, almost unbearable beat against the east winds. We had to man the pumps for some hours each day, but the water came in slowly. We were able to keep it easily in check, and there was no further worry from that source. The boys still worried very much about Walker, and then the other accident following so closely on its heels further disturbed them. The alarming factor about both was that they could so easily happen to anyone. We had always to work in that rigging which had killed one of us, and around those decks which had tried to drown another. Everybody showed the strain of the voyage; everybody prayed fervently for a rapid rounding of the Horn at last. We told ourselves that worries would be over then; they would *have* to be. The Captain, when I was at the wheel, came sometimes and talked about things, about Walker and the ghastly tragedy of his end. He said that he was very worried over it, the more so since Walker had been an only son. I saw that he was now a much greyer man, looking far, far more than his thirty-three years. Always he said that he looked forward only to coming round the Horn;

then he would try to put these things out of his mind, and look forward to the Trade Winds and coming to port, and visiting his home in the Baltic islands where he had not been for over four years. The second mate came, too, sometimes and talked about many things. He talked about the tragedy of the *Pampa*, in which he had sailed; how once she lost a whole watch overboard, mate, lookout, and everybody, in the same sea, and the others who were below did not know about it until the hours passed and the daylight came, and nobody came to call them. The helmsman had seen them go; they found him half frozen, almost in hysteria, clinging to the wheel he dare not leave, where he had been steering the unmanned ship on through the night . . .

The weather did not change much, away down there. We were beyond 55 South then, and the Horn lay in about 56; we steered a little south of east to clear it, and hauled the braces constantly a little this way and that as the wind hauled round a few points. The *Grace Harwar* was a good steering vessel, for a full-rigged ship. With two at the wheel she ran on nicely. We gave her the mains'l, one day, to drive her on. She filled her decks from rail to rail, and rolled and pitched and contorted herself madly like a badly moored bell-buoy in a heavy slop; she put her nose down and went, and that was what we wanted. Snow storms came, and horrible sleet squalls were so constantly our companions that we ceased to notice them. The snow did not lie about the decks; the sea came quickly and washed it away. I could not photograph it. The fore upper tops'l split a couple of its seams and we sewed it aloft, in the squalls. What a job!

The whole watch was there—it was a Sunday, of course—hanging to the canvas while the mate sewed, in his watch, and the second mate in his. It was the refinement of torture to cling there, hour after hour, up on that yard, wet through, frozen, gloveless—for how can you hold canvas with gloves?—hungry, tired. We had no chance to catch up arrears of sleep; we only piled up more. Even in our watches below, when we had them, we could not sleep. It was too cold, and everything was washed out and could not be dried. How could things be dried? There was no sun, and there was no heating system. Some sailing ships carry small stoves in their foc'sle for the benefit of the crew, rounding Cape Horn, but the *Grace Harwar* had nothing. The foc'sle deckhead leaked; there was no comfort anywhere. Beckman and Finila who had enjoyed the luxury of a stove in the 'prentices' quarters of the *Herzogin Cecilie*, resigned themselves to the cold Hades of the *Grace Harwar's* foc'sle and philosophically consoled themselves with the reflection that, after all, it was a good thing to have no comfort anywhere. Then, they reasoned, you didn't mind going out on deck. You had nothing to gain from being in the foc'sle, and therefore you might as well be working. Indeed, there were even advantages in that hateful pastime. Your blood went round and you weren't frozen . . . Finila's clothes hung from him in sodden shreds. The sea swept in and out of his useless sea-boots, and he might as well have had none. In his few words of curious English, he joked about them; he called them his "Rooshian" boots, explaining the derivation from the fact that the sea "rooshed" into them and out again.

One day Beckman suffered a gaping wound in the palm of his right hand, from a gouging blow from a marlinspike, when he was splicing some heavy wire. The point of the spike went in a quarter of an inch, making a nasty, bloody mess of his hand. He finished the splice, and in his watch below washed out the wound with some iodine we had, sponging it carefully. He sharpened a sail-needle and sterilised it by heating it at the galley fire. Then, in a corner of the gloomy foc'sle, he sat upon a sea chest, and, with his left hand, sewed up the palm of his right. He did not ask anyone to do it for him; he felt, maybe, that he could not stand the pain from others' hands. But he could inflict it on himself.

It must have caused him screaming agony; but he stitched on, and uttered no sound. He smiled, when it was finished, and showed us the hand. He made a good job. His mother was a nurse, he said, in Helsingfors; he knew a little of the care of wounds. I saw next day that his face was pretty white and drawn, and he did not look a boy of scarcely eighteen. He was a little chap, with a pale, clean-cut face, soft and almost girlish of expression. He had big blue eyes, surrounded by deep fringes of dark eyelashes; a soft, almost perfect mouth gave his face a girlishness that his spirit belied utterly. He and I had been together in the *Herzogin Cecilie* before, when that woman stowaway was there on a passage up from Port Lincoln to the Channel. I remembered that the stowaway had said, one day, that he was much prettier than she was. He had also other qualities.

On the fifty-seventh day we came round Cape Horn. God be praised! It was some time in the forenoon when we

came around; I don't know exactly the hour. Nobody did. We hadn't had a sight for weeks, and were running on blindly by dead reckoning. A helmsman from our starboard watch burst into the wet foc'sle with the news, coming from the wheel at six bells. The members of the port watch were in there, lying fully dressed, on their bunks. They weren't doing anything, just waiting for the time to come when they must go on deck again, and relieve us, listening to the washing of the seas on the deck outside and the roar of the wind in the rigging. There was three inches of water on the foc'sle floor. Some sea-chests had broken from their lashings and had careered down to leeward, coming up against the wall of the lee bunks. There they remained. Nobody bothered about them. Around the bunks there was a heterogeneous collection of wet clothing, jerseys, oilskins, seaboots, trousers, and the like; by one boy's head was a picture of a cinema star, untrammelled by any great array of clothing. The sea had seeped in through the port and soaked her, imparting to her beauty a woebegone, sorrowful expression.

When the helmsman came in nobody looked up.

"She's round!" he shouted. "Thank God! She's round!"

The pale-faced weary boys leapt up from their bunks, and cheered. It was the sole occasion on that voyage—or upon any other I have made with them—that I saw Scandinavians so give way to their feelings. . . .

In the night there was a little feast in the foc'sle. Walker had planned it, from the very first, and in Wallaroo we had bought a few little things for this grand occasion. We had not thought that we should wait fifty-

seven days for it! Nor that he should not be there. . . . He had planned it. I asked the boys, and they said that the best thing was to carry it through. It was what he would have wished. It was not a jollification, but a thanksgiving and a memorial.

We scrubbed the foc'sle table, and covered it with two white sheets which were clean. They were clean and dry because they had not been previously used. We put some bottles on the table, with candles stuck in their necks, and these were our lights. The nigger, with a little flour, some baking powder, and some bad margarine made some quite passable cakes; we had bought cocoa enough for the occasion, and there was also a small tinned pudding that would give a mouthful each. There was our Adelaide friend's tin of honey, and this was a luxury of great joy. There was a little gin that was contributed by the Captain from his slopchest supply, used upon great occasions of splicing the main brace and welcoming pilots.

The carpenter and the sailmaker came, and sat on a seachest at the head of the table. They had brushed their hair and trimmed their beards, and had on clean shirts for the occasion. All the boys had brushed their hair and cleaned themselves as well as they could; there was a little typed menu for each of them, and a card bearing their names in their places. The nigger acted as waiter, and it was a memorable evening. The mate was taken his share of cake and good things to the poop; the second mate came along to the foc'sle door, by invitation, and standing in the rain and cold out there, quaffed his steaming cocoa and munched his cake, gratefully. He

would not come in, but he seemed to be deeply moved by the function. Everybody was quiet, and there was such a spirit of real fellowship and understanding among us —we representatives of different races and different creeds, different flags and different ideas—that one could not look around upon those faces and not be deeply stirred. Outside the wind howled, and the ship shuddered now and again at the weight of the seas that struck her. The rain beat down on the deckhead above, and the sigh of the gale in the rigging would have been eerie and frightening, if we had not been so thoroughly accustomed to it . . . The ceremony was a memorial service, in a deeply real way, to the spirit who had conceived it in far different fashion; it was thanksgiving, too, that our little band still lived.

CHAPTER X

AFTERWARDS

ON the night of the day that we passed Cape Horn—June 13—the stars came out and Captain Svensson was able, for the first time in weeks, to establish the ship's position accurately. He discovered that the longitude was four degrees out—not four minutes or four miles, but four *degrees*. We were four degrees further on than we had thought we were; we had been able only to plot the ship's course by dead reckoning, which is inefficient at the best of times, dependent as it is upon a mechanical log which may or may not be perfect. A sailing ship moves at such varying speeds that the log which recorded them all accurately would indeed be perfect. At times she goes so slowly that the log does not revolve at all; at other times she moves with just sufficient speed to send the log whizzing round at spasmodic moments, filling in its time with throwing turns into its trailing line. The course and the distance run are the constituents which work up one's dead reckoning; leeway has also to be considered, and currents which are rarely absent. It is all little better than guesswork, especially when it is carried on for weeks, through all kinds of weather and all kinds of winds, with never a chance once to check the calculations. The only means of checking come from a light of the sun, or of the stars; we never saw either for over three weeks.

The discovery that the position was four degrees out —over one hundred and fifty miles—brought home to us to what extent we had been sailing in the lap of the gods, down there, running blindly on through fog and storm and gale, rain and sleet and snow, lightless, alone, not even knowing where we were. We were glad that we were round Cape Horn at last.

The next day we saw Staten Island, away on the port beam, and a forbidding, cold kind of a place it was. The mountains seemed snow-covered almost to the sea and clouds lay heavily over their grim peaks; the day was mild, with a fine fair wind and little sea, and yet it was so gloomy, and dull, and mournfully forbidding that one did not care to look upon the land too much. A good many lovely ships, members of that grand old sisterhood to which *Grace Harwar* belonged, have gone to their doom there; a good many wraiths of sailors rise nightly from the sea just hereabouts, and spring into the riggings of their ghost ships and cry eerily in the clammy air. We were permitted to slip slowly by, now that we were come around the Horn, and we allowed ourselves to hope that our share of tragedy was done for the voyage.

It was still bitterly cold—colder, indeed, than it had been on the Pacific side of the Horn. Nightfall brought a gale from the south, with heavy snow and much work aloft fisting the frozen sails; yet we did not mind. It was fair wind, and we were now heading northwards towards the Trade Winds and the sun. Blow on, South wind! we said. Blow on at your damnedest; flog us with your snow, blind us with your sleet, knife us with your hail, torture us with your ice and your miserable cold—

HOVE-TO

THE *GRACE HARWAR* PHOTOGRAPHED FROM THE WEATHER SIDE

but only blow on! Blot out the land—it doesn't matter now; we have corrected our position, overhauled the log, and the chronometer is right—and whip up the sea to mad frenzy; and we shall laugh. Send the great seas crashing over both rails, tear out the sails, writhe your octopus-arms round us on the reeling yards, scream in the backstays and shriek in the shrouds, roar until you split our ear-drums; blow on, and damn you! And we shall laugh . . . The wind heard, and slunk around into the west, and then northwards of that. We had to shorten down again, and heave her to. We had hoped to pass between the Falklands and the land, standing up westward of those islands and keeping close in to the Patagonian coast, to take advantage of the favouring current there, and for other reasons. By sailing that way we should pass closely by Montevideo, and we should be in a better position for making up through the South Atlantic if the wind was from nor'-west, as it was likely to be at that time of the year, according to the Captain's experience.

But now that the wind was prematurely come from that direction, we were at a loss. We had to have fair wind to pass between the Falklands and South America; it looked as if we could not go that way. The ship was shortened to a few rags, and we held her on, punching into the night. Indeed the Cape Horner's voyage is one long fight with circumstance, one long, wretched battle with the unfriendly wind and the treacherous sea.

Next day the wind lightened and we stood on to pass to the east of the Falkland Islands, but about midday the wind hauled into the west again and we brought it on

the port beam, standing now in a northerly direction again to keep to our original intention. It was a good breeze. It stayed with us, neither too weak nor too strong. She sailed on steadily about eight knots, not now taking big seas aboard but driving heavy sprays constantly over the main-deck and over the foc'sle head. We gave her a little more sail, some upper tops'ls and the mains'l, and afterwards the main lower t'gallants'l as well, seeing that she could stand it. It was piercingly cold and rained frequently, the rain still pursuing its nasty habit of freezing into the serving of the footropes, where it could find a place. Frozen footropes are rather dangerous to walk on, with the ship rolling heavily. You step out from the rigging on to the footrope of the t'gallant yard, and if the ship immediately rolls that way your feet, without a sure grip, may go careering with it, and you have to be pretty careful. The best thing to do is always to keep a good grip of something with your hands, but they become so frozen through and through and painful that it is a positive effort to cling on. And then you can't hold on and work as well.

Now that we were past the Horn we could look round a little and take stock of ourselves. The boys were in a pretty sorry condition, so far as outward appearances went. Nobody had a dry rag; sea boots and oilskins were useless so long that nobody expected efficiency of them; rubber sea boots, worn constantly in a wet condition on wet socks, seem to wear the skin from your feet, and dragging the wet socks off from beneath their wrappings of sacking and so forth, some of the skin comes as well. We tried all manner of things to keep our feet warm.

Bergqvist pinned his faith in yards of burlap, wrapped round his feet, inside his sea boots, in puttee fashion; Beckman stuck to three pairs of socks; Finila inserted sheets of newspaper between his feet and the soles of those "Rooshian" boots of his, but as the sea never ceased to "roosh" into them and out again, neither that nor any other method was much use. He didn't seem to mind. He had been wet through for so long—two months!—and frozen inside and out that he had lost all capacity for suffering; in places the skin was worn from his body through the constant chafing of wet clothes, and his hands were in a ghastly mess with deep gaping wounds from the ceaseless hauling at the wet ropes. That is very hard on the hands, no matter how used to it all they may be.

Everybody else, in varying degrees, was in much the same condition. French Peter had the deepest sea chest I ever saw brought aboard by a foc'sle hand, but there was nothing left in it at Cape Horn. He had been three years fishing on the Newfoundland banks, in French trawlers—twice in little barquentines and once in a small steamer. He said that they spent seven months on the Banks, in the barquentines, while they caught their fill of fish, and never once enjoyed change of any kind. They went out in their little boats from the barquentine and caught cod. They came back in their little boats to the barquentine and ate cod. They worked hard on the decks of their barquentine and split, cleaned, and salted cod. They spent long, hungry, frigid hours in their tiny boats catching cod; and that went on for seven months. Their tempers were pretty raw, long before it was all over. The boys didn't have exactly a heavenly time of it, espe-

cially if the cod were elusive and the hold was not filling as quickly as it should. It was a hard school, French Peter told us. I believe that it was. . . . He had all his clothes from the trawlers—high leather boots, with knitted woollen socks that came half-way up his thighs, to be worn inside the boots and outside his trousers; thick woollen jerseys, from Iceland, that were about a quarter of an inch through; heavy caps that came all about his ears and covered his face so completely that he must have had something of a job to breathe when they were on; felt-lined coats, and fur-lined trousers. With all these he was still badly off. He lent out what he could. Everything, in his possession and the borrowers', was soon completely wet through, and, being so heavy, could not be induced to exhibit again the slightest evidence of dryness. The flapping sails knocked his caps from his head, and the spokes of the wheel wore out the gloves. The felt and the fur absorbed the moisture and would not part with it again, upon any conditions. His outfit was splendid for a climate that was only frigidly cold, but when it became also constantly wet as well, it broke down. So would any other outfit on earth, except a succession of diving suits. And then you could scarcely go aloft in them.

It is a curious thing that one may be wet through for so long, and for so long suffer acute discomforts, yet suffer nothing in health, have no "colds," nor the slightest tendency to illness of any kind. Nobody ever coughed. Nobody suffered pneumonia, nor any other of these ills which come to one in towns. Nobody had a "sore throat," nor chilblains, nor a sniffling nose, nor hoarse voice.

These things do not come from the sea; salt water does not breed sickness. That is a thing that slinks round city streets, striking down persons with collars on, living the sham, shut-up life the city forces on them.

We cleared the Falklands on their western side, after all, seeing nothing of them though a big school of sea-lions came to play around the bows one day and there were more birds about than we had seen throughout the rest of the voyage. We could not have been far from the land, although it was not to be seen. No sooner were we clear of the land than the wind came from the nor'west again, and stayed there, driving us well out into mid-Atlantic away from the land. It didn't matter. We held the wind on the port beam, keeping her full and by, heading in about a north-easterly direction towards the Trade Wind belt and England. The sailing ship never makes a direct voyage; she never can.

Day after day the nor'westerly wind held, with a steady strength and direction, and we sailed on steadily about two hundred miles a day. This was, looking back on it, about the best part of the voyage. It rained frequently, of course, and the ship still slopped water over herself so heavily that it was difficult to work on deck. We still went daily through whatever tasks there were beneath the shelter of the foc'sle head, nor was there ever scarcity of work. We took the footropes down, one by one, and took them in beneath the foc'sle head, there testing them, giving them new stirrups of strong wire, and replacing the serving where it was necessary, tarring them and sending them aloft again; we spliced new grommets, to seize on the jackstays for better safety aloft; we sewed

buntline block mats, new sails; we spliced new boltropes for a flying jib and a mizzen t'gallants'l, and served again old boltropes that had been round Cape Horn a dozen times. We overhauled blocks, and sent the braces down. We set up new topmast rigging on the mizzen, working out in the rain and cold for that, since the seas could not reach up to there. We stood our watch and watch, and the life of the ship went quietly on. With the steady wind there was little need now for all hands on deck at frequent and unpleasant hours of the night; we got our sleep.

So June passed, and July came, ushered in under the same conditions. It was still midwinter down there, of course, with winter's accompanying forces of rain and gale. Still, we did not do so badly. We were getting on, and that was something. Jim came into the little cabin for company; Beckman's hand was healing, and the boys looked forward to an early opportunity of drying their clothes. There was a splendid spirit about the ship and all who sailed in her; the mates were fine fellows, both of them, who knew their work; the Captain knew his, and we were a contented band. Still the decks were always wet, of course, and we shivered at the lookout by night and at the wheel; the force of the wind aloft forced moisture heavily from our eyes which, streaming down our faces, froze in our beards; but by comparison with the other side of Cape Horn it was Paradise.

We had our meals regularly; the food was rough, as it has to be, but there was enough of it. We killed a small pig, leaving one for the North Atlantic, and ate it joyfully. It was a Saturday afternoon when it was

slaughtered and the watch below looked upon the bloody operation with fiendish joy. The nigger killed it, and took a great delight in the job; he could not understand why I neglected to film the gruesome operation. The cook made some kind of pancakes out of the blood, and could not understand it when they failed to appeal to the English palates of the foc'sle. If we did not appreciate the blood pancakes, however, we had no two opinions about the pork! It was fine.

We had few luxuries in that life; on Friday afternoons we were allowed a piece of cake, made from flour, a little sugar, and some margarine of indifferent quality. On Sunday mornings there were pancakes. These were our weekly high lights in the food line. Beans, salt meat and bully beef constituted the principal foodstuffs for the rest of the week. It was plain food, but wholesome. There was plenty of coffee, as is the Scandinavian style.

Sjöberg, Beckman, Roy, Alf and the nigger began to make little models of the *Grace Harwar*, with varying skill. The nigger made his for insertion in a bottle; Sjöberg and Beckman had made others previously, and were good hands at it. Hägert, Sailmaker Blomqvist, Bergqvist and the cook gave themselves navigation lessons, in preparation for the time when they would go to navigation school ashore in Finland; Sjölund taught himself to play an old and unmelodious accordion we had, which was all there was aboard in the way of musical instruments; Filimon slept. Jim, who had neglected in previous ships to record any of their happenings, wrote voluminously in his log which went back over his other experiences and dealt with the *Grace Harwar* in a

straightforward and sometimes libellous manner. Everybody had plenty to do, in day watches below. On the way to Cape Horn it was hopeless to try to do anything; if one were below one tried to sleep, and let it go at that. It was useless to think of trying anything else, and besides we had some considerable leeway in sleep to get back.

On the sixty-eighth day the sun shone! Brightly, and with warmth! We greeted it with smiles, and the ship was so hung with wet and sodden clothes that she must have looked, had anyone seen her passing by, like a floating pawnshop or an advertisement for Petticoat Lane. The cook made pancakes for breakfast and we had roast pork for dinner; it was indeed a day. I heard from the Captain that the ship had sailed 1,100 miles in the previous six days, which was her best effort of the voyage. It seemed that our ill-luck was ended and we could sail quietly on for the Trades, the Line, and Home.

So we came across 40 South. We were daily at the pumps of course, soundings giving generally from ten to fourteen inches each day. That was not bad, so long as the leak became no more serious. Gases from the rotting wheat now began to rise from the hold, through the two ventilators on the foredeck and through the ventilators on the poop. They were horrible gases which, after a while, began to burn the paint from the bulwarks, causing the white steel to go a nasty brownish colour most unpleasant to look upon. Standing at the wheel one could not avoid this gas, and sometimes it was sickening. At the lookout it still pursued one; thank heavens we were free of it in the foc'sle, at least temporarily. There was some risk of fire, under these conditions, especially

as the constant wash of the seas aboard made it difficult to ventilate the holds. We ventilated them when we could and hoped for the best. If spontaneous combustion was to occur—and there was, of course, now some risk of it —we should have to make for somewhere. Even steamers have little chance when that happens.

We were not then looking forward to an early coming of the Trades, expecting that we should have to get to somewhere about 25 South at least before they came, seeing that the sun was then so far north. But that did not matter, so long as the wind held from the nor'west; we were steadily making up through the South Atlantic, out in a wide sweep from the coast of South America, almost half-way across to Africa. So long as we had wind we did not mind; sooner or later the Trades would come, and our worries would be at an end. The pleasant part of the voyage would be with us, and we could forget our wounds and go quietly on. We could not forget—could never forget—what had happened, but it would slip back a little in our minds, when the wind ceased to howl and the rain to weep.

And then, when we were least expecting it, when at last we thought that Fate was through with us, it struck us a foul blow again. In a way, it was the foulest and unfairest blow of the voyage. The second mate, a young and splendid man, well trained in his calling and admirable in every respect, was broken down utterly by the trials of the voyage and the culmination of other worries from other voyages before, and suffered so severe a nervous breakdown as to imperil his reason. It happened with unnerving suddenness, when we were least expecting

further worries. We knew that he had been very worried since Walker died, but so had we all; we did not think anything particularly of that.

It was on a Saturday morning, when we members of the starboard watch were on deck. That was his watch, of course. We were assembled beneath the foc'sle head, a little before one bell—half past twelve—which was the hour at which we went to our midday meal on Saturdays, clearing away the gear we had been using in our work, marline spikes and serving mallets and the like. We were taking things easily, since there was no need to do otherwise. We were left to ourselves, each with his job; there was no slave-driving. The second mate was accustomed to come for'ard when we came on deck, assign us each our jobs, and let it go at that. This one was sent to rattle down the mizzen topmast rigging, that one to look to the buntline blocks on the main, a boy to get up coal for the cook, someone else to help the sailmaker. There were not so many of us. Then he sometimes helped the sailmaker himself, since he had had that job before the mast before he took his "ticket"; sometimes he had work of his own aft, and often, if there was a very heavy splice to put in some obnoxious and rusty wire, he did it himself. He was a good sailor, good at the ordinary work about the decks as well as at trimming the yards and getting the utmost out of the wind. It is not easy to be a good second mate, but he was one.

Sometimes he drifted along to see how we were getting on, but it was in a friendly and advisory capacity and never in a critical or faultfinding way. He could talk and yarn and laugh with his boys, and yet hold them in

perfect discipline; he could indulge in horseplay with them and hold their profound respect. He knew his job, and he was a man. You get a pretty clear view of who is a man and who isn't in a sailing ship.

The ship was going nicely along. We had no need to touch a brace once in the watch. The helmsmen had a good time at their successive hour tricks at the wheel; it did not rain, and it was pleasant to stand there, giving her a slow spoke or two now and again and thinking of the other members of the watch at work. We did not look upon the wheel as work in the daytime, in moderate or pleasant weather.

"Wotser time?" demanded Roy, in Australian.

"Soon bloody one bells," vouchsafed Finila, in his version of the same language; on learning which Roy flung his deck broom into the bos'n's locker and sat upon the windlass end. Sjölund and the sailmaker were clearing up in the little sail loft below; French Peter was hastily finishing a splice. We saw the second mate coming slowly along the deck, from aft, and attached no significance to that. He had been joking with us a little before six bells.

He came closer; we saw that he looked very tired. That was not strange; he had been looking very tired and strained, now, since Walker died.

"I shall not be giving you any more jobs," he said to us quietly, when he reached us.

Roy smiled. "That's good, sir," he said. "We can get along without them."

We others smiled, too, thinking the second mate was referring to the near approach of our going below and

the fact that it was Saturday, giving us a holiday on the morrow.

"But I mean it," he went on. "I mean that I shall not be giving you any more jobs aboard this ship as second mate."

We stared at him in surprise. What was wrong? We saw now that there were deep lines of strain in his face; he looked as if he had not been asleep for weeks. He seemed to have some difficulty in standing there, despite the quietness and evenness of his voice. He glanced from one to the other of us, a little wildly.

"I shall not be giving you any more jobs," he said again. "Come aft with me and I shall explain."

He spoke quietly and rationally, although now we could see that he was trembling a little. Sobered up instantly, we followed him in wonder as he led the way along the main deck. What on earth was wrong? What had happened now? What was going to happen? What was there to explain? Good Lord, there never was a better second mate; *he* had nothing to explain. Was he going to resign his rank? What for? Heavens, what for?

He did not say another word as he walked slowly aft, but now it was evident enough that something very serious was wrong. The other watch were in at their midday meal as we passed by the foc'sle, and did not see us go. Sjölund and the sailmaker came up from the sail loft and wandered aft with us, wondering and puzzled. The second mate did not look round We passed the galley, the carpenter's cabin, the main hatch, with its heavy built-up breakwater, the main mast, with its mass of

intricate lines; we came to the boat skids, close now to the sacred precincts of the poop near which we never approached unless we were sent to work on the mizzen mast, or were going to or coming from the wheel. This was the quarter deck, in naval tradition; "abaft the mast," in merchant service lore. We belonged before the mast, and were not accustomed to being received abaft it except upon great occasions of splicing the main brace after twenty-four hours on deck. The second mate advanced to the door of the saloon and, glancing back for the first time, saw that his watch had gathered hesitatingly beneath the skids, fearful of bursting in upon those sacred planks in that wholesale manner, completely unable to comprehend what had brought us there.

"Come along," he said, still in the same quiet voice. "Come right in. I have something to say that you all should hear."

He waited by the door for a moment or two while we shuffled forwards, still with hesitation and wonder plain on our faces, still not convinced that we were within our rights in thus invading the quarters of the afterguard.

Just inside the saloon companion, which was entered through this door opening out on to the main deck, was a small messroom in which the officers ate their meals. Here the Captain, the two mates, and the carpenter dined in state. With the exception of Korhonen, the steward, no one else lived in the poop. With the exception of the cook, no one else ever went there. On this day Captain Svensson sat at the head of the table with the chief mate and carpenter, who were in the same watch; Korhonen

was mixing some lime-juice in preparation for the tropics.

They looked up in amazement as the second mate went in. He took off his cap; we crowded round the mess-room door and the door at the entrance to the saloon alley-way, since the second mate had bidden us, but still doubtful of our right to be there.

They were too amazed to say anything, at the sight of this unprecedented wholesale intrusion. Whatever did it mean?

They were not left in doubt long.

The second mate began to speak in Swedish, rapidly, quietly at first but soon not so quietly. He began by saying that he wished to resign from his position as second mate, and he wanted his watch there to be witnesses and hear why. He could not go on, he said. He was being driven mad; ever since Walker died he had not slept. Always he had worried over that; always, at every minute, through every watch, he had gone again and again over the incidents of that fateful morning; always he blamed himself, that he had not seen that he was clear of the yard, that he had not known the halliards were unreliable, that he had not done something, thought of something, to avoid that calamity. He thought of it as he walked the poop by night and watched the wind; he thought of it when he went below and vainly sought some rest; he thought of it through the days, when others were forgetting a little, and going on. He could not stand it! He could not go on. He did not trust himself; every time he sent others of us aloft—and that was daily—he was afraid that we, too, would be killed; he knew that some of the gear might have been unsafe,

despite all the care and attention that was given it. There was so much that it could not all be perfect, in so old a ship. Other things had carried away; one did not know where the guano rot might have permeated. He could stand it no longer; if the Captain would allow him to resign and help the sailmaker, he would be satisfied. He felt that he could no longer stand the responsibilities of a mate. He wanted company, someone to talk to, some lowly thing to do, to occupy his mind. He would take the blame for what had happened, and stand the consequences.

His voice rose. His eyes now held a wild look, and he trembled violently . . . The Captain began to interpose something, in a quiet voice. Amazed as he was, he saw quicker than we did what was wrong. There was nobody to blame for what had happened, he said; it was all in the log. Nothing was held against the second mate. Nothing could be, for he had done no wrong. (Perfectly true, if ever anything was.) He had no reason to worry, but if he felt that he needed rest he could take a week's holiday, or longer than that, and he himself—the Captain—would stand his watch. It was quite all right. The ship was coming to the better weather then. The hard parts of the voyage were over; there was no need now for dangerous work aloft. Perhaps the second mate had not been sleeping well; he would mix him up something from the medicine chest for that.

The second mate listened, wild-eyed. We saw now that the Captain was trying desperately to save him from breakdown, if it could be done. This was as much a shock to him as anyone; yet he saw, and acted imme-

diately. We tried to melt away, thinking that this was a thing best left to the afterguard, best reasoned out between Captain and second mate.

The second mate saw us.

"Don't go!" he cried. "Don't go!" He was now wilder eyed than ever, working into a dangerous state. "Don't go! I want you to hear! I cannot go on! It is all true: I blame myself! I cannot sleep! I cannot go on fighting myself, telling myself that I am wrong, that it was not my fault; I am afraid of myself; I want you to know that I blame myself for everything, that I try no longer to convince myself I am not blameworthy. I would not harm anyone; you believe that? . . . I would not harm anyone, O God; watch me, my Captain, that now I do not harm myself! . . . I am gone! O God! I am gone!"

He sank his face in his great hands and slipped down on to the messroom floor.

I never was present upon a more harrowing occasion in my life; I never saw so terrifying and moving a scene.

CHAPTER XI

THE WIND CHANGE

THE second mate was no more to blame for Walker's death than I was. Indeed, I was more to blame. I talked sailing ships to him back in Hobart; it was his idea, that we should try to get this film, but I got our jobs. I found the ship; I made the thing practicable, at least to the extent of getting a ship to sail in. I was responsible for his being there.

The day after Walker was killed—the day of the burial—the second mate came to me and talked about it. He was worried then about the fact that Walker was still on the lower t'gallant yard when we began to heave again on the halliards, hoisting the yard above him. But we had gone into all that then. He said he should have seen him on the yard, that he should have been sure he was clear. But the facts were that, in the place where the unfortunate young man was standing when he was killed, he could not be seen from the deck. It was quite dark, and he was standing between the rigging and the yard. You might not have seen him, even looking from the same level on the main mast; from the deck it was a matter of utter impossibility. Even Finila, close above, could not see him. Finila thought him to be clear of the yard. So did we all. We never gave a thought to the possibility that he was not. Had not Walker—and this surely absolved the second mate from all semblance of

blame, assuming that there was ever any thought of blame —had he not himself called down that everything was clear? "All clear, sir!" he shouted. Fateful words! . . .

No, the second mate was no more to blame than the wind. He had no reason to distrust the halliards, no reason to think that anything would go wrong, no slightest suspicion that Walker might still have been on the yard. It was pitch dark; Walker was good aloft and careful. He knew the danger of hoisting yards. He knew the need for care aloft, at all times . . . The second mate did all he could. Royal sheets and t'gallant braces were gone before ever we began to hoist the yard; he saw to that. And then there was the circumstance that the foremast was not in his charge. That was the domain of the port watch; we starboarders looked after main and mizzen, while the foremast and the bowsprit were the care of the mate and his watch. Nor was there reason for anyone to think that the halliard would go; it had been looked to, only a few days before. There was no sign of guano rot. There was not sufficient new rope in the ship to replace everything that had been in use on the guano grounds. *That* was not the second mate's fault.

We had gone over all that at the time. I saw that the second mate was deeply moved, though he hid it well. He carried on, to outward view. He did not speak of the tragedy again. He asked me if I held him blameworthy in any way, and I answered that I did not; I thought it was ended at that. The Captain came often to speak of it, at the wheel; the second mate never did. He came to speak of other things, of the position of the Swedes in Finland and the oppression of the real Finns, of the

efforts to compel all races and all creeds in Finland to speak and to use the true Finnish tongue, as opposed to the Swedish to which so many of them were accustomed; of the wind and the sea, and the progress of the voyage. He spoke also with French Peter sometimes at the wheel. It was unorthodox, perhaps, this practice of officers indulging in a word or two sometimes with their helmsmen. But surely they are to be forgiven. Theirs is a lonely job, at the best of times; the second mate also wished to improve his knowledge of English, though he spoke that language well, and he rarely spoke when any of the Finnish members of his watch were at the wheel. It was not that he liked them any the less. He liked us all, and was liked by all in return. He joked with Finila sometimes, and gave him clothes; to Bergqvist also he gave much-needed apparel that he could ill spare. Sjölund had been with him in the ship two years, and they were old friends. With Walker he used to speak about the film, and ask how we were getting on and what we hoped.

But for the most part he occupied his night watches with many walkings of the poop, upon the lee side when the Captain was there, upon the weather when he was alone. He varied his course on rare occasions by using the small flying bridge leading to the standard compass between the boats as a promenade; in very bad weather when the helmsmen were lashed to the wheel, he sometimes stood beside them, conning the ship, watching the wind and the sea, and how the old ship rode. Always he had to watch the wind and the sails; even with a steady breeze there are constant fluctuations demanding attention, a haul of the braces this way or that, a slight alteration of

the course, if it does not matter much, to bring the wind more on the quarter or to avoid bracing when heavy seas are rolling aboard. He was in the habit of frequently changing the course a little—half a point each side, maybe—when there was danger of the boys being swept overboard at the braces if he tried to trim the yards. Half a point or so does not matter, ordinarily, in a sailing ship's course. She is not steered to degrees. She sails no direct lines. She does the best she can with the winds she gets, and her officers do what they can to help her.

The second mate had been, then, four years in the ship, joining her as sailmaker in Swansea in 1925. For one voyage he acted in that capacity, although he was qualified as second mate; then the old chief mate left and he moved into the second mate's cabin. For four years he had had no holiday, sailing ceaselessly round the world, on terrifically trying voyages, in the *Grace Harwar*. When the ship came into port there was no rest. There was ballast to get out of her, guano to get in, or wheat, or heavy lumber; there was always work for the small crew and worry for the officers who commanded them. At sea there was no rest. In the Trade Winds the dwellers of the foc'sle may have easy times, with a steady balmy breeze and no need to trim the sails or the yards for weeks on end, and nothing to do at night save lookout and steer. But the second mate must stand his watch. He can never afford to lose his vigilance, not for a moment. Throughout the whole of his watch on deck he must be on deck, awake, alert, watchful and vigilant. In Finnish ships he stands seven hours one night, and four the next—from 7 P.M.

until midnight and again from 4 A.M. until 6, and then midnight until 4 A.M. alternately. He has to be promptly on his watch, to relieve the mate. He has no friends at sea, because he has no equals, and tradition rules that a man may draw his friends only from his equals in the ship of sails. Everyone in the ship is either above or below him. The watch is below him, in his charge. The cook, sailmaker, steward and carpenter are petty officers, also of lesser rank. The mate and the captain are above him, as completely as if they belonged to another world. He rarely sees the mate, for that matter, except on deck, because the mate is always on deck when he is below, and below when he is on deck; they never eat together. Meals are taken in watch below, the Captain usually dining with the senior officer. The second mate eats his food in lonely state, and has no company. He may drop a word to the cook occasionally, though that is among the things not really done. Upon great occasions the Captain may walk the poop with him for an hour or two of the seven-to-midnight watch, and yarn. The sailmaker he does not see much. The sailmaker is the Captain's friend, for the Captain also is a lonely man; by night, in the bad weather sections of the voyage, the sailmaker has charge of the boys for'ard and sees that they are always ready for the call; in the better weather he is dayman and not in a watch at all. The carpenter is on the same footing, except that he is drafted in the mate's watch.

No, the second mate can have no friends. Night after night, week after week, month after month, he must

tramp the poop in his loneliness and find his company and his pleasure in his thoughts.

That was precisely the one thing which it was fatal for the second mate to do; but we did not know. If only he had confided in someone! If only he had let us know! But he did not; he was not that kind. He went on, true to the traditions of his calling, and fought himself alone; he did not break down until the time came when he could no longer go on.

Looking back, after it had happened, we thought of many things. We remembered that it was he who sewed up the body, in its canvas shroud. He didn't seem to be worried unduly, I thought at the time. How wrong I was! He had begun to fight then, and had taken himself in hand right from the very beginning. The tragedy was a severe shock to his nerves; he knew it was, and told himself that he must take a strong grip of himself, and fight it hard. And so he took the lead in the operations which preceded the burial; he did the things that had to be done and no one wished to do; and we were glad, not understanding why . . . We remembered, too, that he was deeply moved at the burial. We remembered the gentleness in his tones, when he spoke to us afterwards. We remembered many occasions when he had betrayed anxiety in his glances aloft while we were at work there —little glances to which no significance was attached at the time; he never indicated that he was afraid for us. That would have been bad for our nerves. He kept his fears to himself, and fought himself alone.

We remembered that, only the day before he broke down, a steel wire grommet from the lower tops'l yard,

UNBENDING THE BLOWN-OUT MIZZEN TOPGALLANT SAIL

LOOKING UP THE MAINMAST

on which one of our lives might have depended on many an occasion during the voyage, had rusted through and fallen to the deck, landing at his feet. I was beside him then; I saw him start. He picked it up and looked gravely anxious.

"I have been in this ship four years," he said, "and always the gear has been looked after. Yet these things happen."

He threw it over the side and I thought no more about it.

It must have been hell for him, walking the poop at night, turning over in his mind always the same thing. Was he to blame? Could nothing have averted the tragedy? At first he convinced himself, without much difficulty, that he was not to blame; as the days passed it became not so easy. He could not escape from his thoughts. If the weather changed, that made no difference. There was always the ship. Along the decks he saw the capstan round which we tramped; aloft he saw the yard, with the blood still on the sail—*that* never came off. On the poop he saw the place where we buried him, where the Captain stood and gave that address. At the wheel he missed the figure of the helmsman who no longer came; from the lookout he missed the voice of the sailor who no longer cried with the passing hours, "All's well!" He was a very conscientious man. A thousand men in his place would have worried no more. He went over in his mind, countless thousands of times, every incident of that morning; he worried over it, and worried over it again, until in the end he came to convince himself that he *was* to blame and that he had done wrong. He brought

himself to such a state of mental torture that he broke down, and it was nothing but the excellence of his own character that broke him down. What a world! And he was twenty-seven, a fine and splendid man, healthy, straightforward, competent, reliable.

But he was also deeply sensitive, though he gave no sign of that. Four years of authority in a square-rigged Cape Horner would try any man, when he has no rest and no relief. He was a man who felt deeply over things; he had in his nature a good deal of that Scandinavian melancholy which is stronger among the Swedish Finns than their Norse brethren, pronounced though it often is in them. He was reserved; he had little to say, and that little did not reveal himself. He was a man who never for a moment thought of inflicting his worries upon other people. He fought on against them alone.

There were other things to remember. Walker was not the first to die aboard that ship. There was the young sailmaker, at Guanape. And then there had been the *Pampa*, before, when he was quite young; he had served also in other ships. He went to sea first at the age of fifteen; he had no boyhood and no youth. He had been nine years on end in Cape Horn sailing ships. Nine years on end! It was nothing much, perhaps, in the old clipper days, of well-found ships and plenty of men, but it is a taste of hell in the few undermanned old survivors that still battle on. The full-rigger was notoriously the hardest ship to manage; both the *Pampa* and the *Grace Harwar* were full-rigged ships. He had not been in a steamer, nor in a comfortable small barque. I do not think he had served in a well-manned ship—according to English or

American standards—in his life . . . It was a real tragedy that he was left to walk that poop, night after night, week after week, and fight on with his thoughts alone. But what could be done? He gave no sign. He looked tired, but he did not complain. He did not tell anyone. He never asked for something to help him sleep, though afterwards he said that he had gone weeks almost without closing his eyes. We others were also fighting with our thoughts, but we were not as sensitive as he was, and not as tried; we determined that when we passed Cape Horn we would turn down a page in our lives. We did not want nor try to forget; but we had to go on. We had to bring the ship to her destination. Perhaps he, also, tried to turn down a page; but he could not. In our moments of greatest trial, we had each other for company, we dwellers of the foc'sle. We were a little band with standards of pretence towards each other; we could laugh things off, make believe, chaff. We could smile to each other when we were in hell, each knowing well the other's smile was only sham, but comforted and helped by it no less; the second mate was alone . . .

The shock of his breakdown was a severe one. All that night, and for many nights afterwards, the watch stood by aft, hanging silently around beneath the boatskids, keeping vigilant watch on the dim light that burned in the alley-way, outside the second mate's cabin. He lay in there, trying to sleep, now broken down utterly. There was nothing we could do; how often had that been our bitter reflection that voyage! But what could we do? While he was in the ship, he could not mend, and we were then but halfway or so on our voyage. The wind was

from nor'west, not allowing us to make towards Buenos Aires, Santos or Montevideo. We allowed her to run off a point or two, and headed towards Cape Town. It would be splendid if we could land him there, though it was a thousand miles and more out of her course. The wind would not allow us to go elsewhere, and neither a thousand miles nor a voyage could matter when life and reason were at stake.

We stood our watch quietly, thinking of this latest calamity. The boys were white-faced and very drawn; in the foc'sle there were whispered consultations. On deck we did not say anything. Again we were pitched into all the horror of Walker's death, the agony of the descent from the rigging with the ominously drooping figure, the nerve-shocking, frightening, astounding discovery that he was dead—that we could do nothing!—the ghastliness of the preparations, and the indescribable sadness of the burial. We had hoped to turn down a page; now we were deeper in it than ever, and worse.

We began again to go over in our minds, constantly and without rest, the incidents of that morning. We saw again the lifeless figure, heard again the moaning wind, listened again to the quiet voice of the Captain telling us that he was dead . . . Were we right to imagine that he suffered no pain? That his end had found him unalarmed, peaceful, unperturbed? By what process of reasoning were we so sure of that? *Ought* we to be so sure? Always when there is a fatality, there are some seconds unexplained. There is some space of time, however brief, when no one can say what the person who has died was thinking, how much they knew, what they did.

When the yard came down there was a brief instant before it landed; what had he done then? *Had* he known? Could he know? We had gone over all these things before, and satisfactorily answered them; now we were not so satisfied, and accepted nothing. We had tried to bring ourselves to accept this waste of life, to reason that it must have been according to some plan, that it was no end; the service had brought us solace and rest of mind. We believed, after that. And now we were flung into hell again . . .

We saw again the moonlight on the pallid face and the staring eyes; they haunted us, those eyes! Death is a mockery, fit end to the foolishness called life; we were now shaken again in all our beliefs and all our lulling thoughts, these things we had reasoned out to help us to accept things and go on. If life was according to Divine plan, a testing place to find our worthiness, then what happened when the reason that drove the body on broke down? What allowance did God make for that? Was the soul that dwelt in the mind—for it could have no other place—liberated, when madness came? It was all too inexplicable and shockingly cruel to us, and unfair and hard. . . . If the flesh was tried until the soul fled from the mind, then had you qualified? Or had you failed? And what of those who were born in madness? Were they reckoned as never having been alive? . . . We were not clever people, as I have said before, with vast learning and profound philosophy to fall back upon. We were not from universities nor schools of theology; we were from the hard ranks of everyday life, quite ordinary beings, people from the street. We would probably

not have worried about these things if they had not been hurled at us. And now we were heavily beset, and afraid. We walked the decks in silence, and looked oút upon the sea; inwardly we cried to Whatever Being there may be responsible for us, and asked of Him if we were not to count upon our minds to support the flesh in its hell crusade? Leave us our reason, O God! we prayed. Leave us our reason, if you expect us to go on!

For we began to feel that we might be tried too much, and break down. The boys were nervous and afraid. They said so, and they were hardly driven to do that. Bergqvist recalled, with a white face, how he had dreamt once that a call came for all hands, and the first to arise from his bunk in the foc'sle was Walker—Walker's wraith. He awoke screaming; he thought he was screaming. But he made no sound. We others had not heard. He was terribly frightened, he admitted to us, and we sympathised.

French Peter said he had been afraid aloft, afterwards; others agreed with him. They were all afraid now.

There followed ghastly days and terrible nights of carrying on and watching the second mate. We did what we could for him, still headed toward Cape Town. Sometimes he had clearer moments; sometimes he just lay on his bunk for hours, and stared above him, seeing nothing. We could not help him when he was like that. At other times he sent for us, different ones by name, to talk to him—often the Captain and I, because I had been Walker's friend, and always he talked of the same subject, the subject that I most wished to avoid. We talked to him, and talked to him, and talked to him, and reasoned

with him, and went again and again and again over all the incidents of that night, pointing out how he was not to blame, how no one blamed him, how it could not be helped. It was God's will; he died mercifully. We reasoned with him when we had little faith ourselves; we talked to him in the middle of the night, as one would a restless child. We talked to him at daybreak and sunset, at the changing of the watches and in our watch below. We tried to drift the conversation to other things, but did not succeed much. We tried to play cards with him; there was no music, though he asked for that. There was nothing to lift us out of the depression of our minds.

We hoped the ship would soon come to Cape Town or to somewhere, where there would be an end.

One day we got him to smile. He fought hard, poor devil! In his better moments he took himself in hand again, as he had been doing before, and he fought against himself so hard that he induced breakdown again. He worried over the fact that he had given in—but it was no giving in—and worried himself into prostration again. The Captain was splendid; so was everyone. But no one could alter the fundamental fact that there could be no restoration to sound health for him again while he was in that ship. And about that we were helpless.

The nightmarish watches slipped slowly by. There was plenty of work, of course. The pumps required daily attention; the gas was much worse. We had now begun also to clean up the ship, getting the rust from the white bulwarks, where the heavy seas had constantly swept them throughout the voyage. The weather became a little kinder, and sometimes we could direct the second mate's

attention to the sunshine on his glass port. He asked often how much longer we might be getting to port, and expressed the wish that we should get there quickly that he might be free of the ship, and receive attention.

We looked forward with hope to Cape Town or St. Helena, if we could reach there. And then, when we were about half-way across the South Atlantic, almost within striking distance of the Cape, there came a sudden wind change as there often does in the winter months, and the wind that had been nor'westerly with such strange constancy swung into the east and blew like fury.

It was the strongest blow of the voyage. We had to get the fores'l and the mizzen lower tops'l off her, and we had not taken a lower tops'l off her even on the road to Cape Horn.

It was pretty bad. It was not the scream of the gale and the work that we minded, nor the great sea that ran and swept right over the vessel. We could not pump, but we did not mind that. We were again driven from the foc'sle, but that did not worry us. What worried us was the fact that the ship was now hove-to on the starboard tack, heading somewhere northwards, and the wind stayed there for days and all hope of reaching anywhere was gone. We could not make Cape Town! We were thousands of miles from Buenos Aires. We could do nothing but carry on. The second mate was worse and we could not help him.

Hope? We did not think of that! We were no longer concerned with the baubles of hope and hopelessness. We were concerned with the retention of our sanity, to carry on.

CHAPTER XII

SHIPS AND THE SEA

AT this stage I shall digress a little, to say something of other ships and the sea—other ships in which I served, and the sea I knew. I went to sea because I wanted to, with some idea of taking it up as a profession and "working up" until I became a master or maybe a nightwatchman somewhere ashore, at a sufficiently hoary age. I was always interested in the sea; among my earliest memories are those of walks around the waterfront of Melbourne, the Victoria Dock and the narrow Yarra, gazing in admiration and intense interest upon the many grand old sailing ships that used to lie along those quays and wharves there, and out in the Bay off Williamstown. I saw then several ships in which I was to sail years afterwards; I had not then any thought of sailing in them, because I thought—or was told—that every healthy boy wanted to go to sea, at some time or other, and when he became older he "grew out of it" and became much more sensible. I remembered, in support of this theory, that I had also, at different times—or it may have been the same—expressed the profound intention of following vocations as diverse as horse riding and engine driving.

But I did go to sea.

In Melbourne, about that time—this was 1918, the last year of the war, when I was just thirteen—there was

an old master mariner who had served many years in sail himself and was then ashore with the job of surveyor to the Marine Board of Melbourne. He served the last of his sea-years in command on the Australian coast. He saw that, both in these ships and in those which belonged to many of the big British companies, the proportion of Britishers in the crews, before and abaft the mast, was not great. He saw that the Government of Australia was trying, by protective legislation of different kinds, to build up an Australian mercantile marine. He saw also that no one was doing anything about providing an Australian sailor to serve in that fleet, when it came into existence—if it ever did. He was not concerned with political moves for the promotion of merchant navies or commercial interests, but he was concerned with helping adventurous Australian youth to find an outlet for its energy and its lust for adventure in ships at sea.

It was then, and it still is, a difficult matter for an Australian to begin a career at sea unless he were prepared to sign in some coastal steamboat as firemen's peggy or deckboy, or be indentured to serve four years on the coast. Few companies would consider indentures, and in any case to spend four years wandering to and fro on the Australian coast, even upon as wide a range as Fremantle to Brisbane, was not exactly the best outlet that a boy might find for the spirit of romance that was in him. There was then also the Australian Commonwealth Line, doomed later to wreck utterly, but here the waiting list of apprentices and boys desirous of becoming apprentices was very large. The Line had two sailing ships, the barques *Shandon* and *John Murray*.

The *John Murray* was wrecked on an island in the Pacific and the *Shandon* did not long survive the end of the war. Without influence and without friends, the only thing the ordinary boy might do was to look out for what job he might find in a steamer—or that would have been all he could do, if my friend the Surveyor to the Marine Board of Melbourne had not stepped into the breach.

Suffern was his name, Captain C. Suffern; he was a small man with a pointed grey beard and keen eyes. He was a splendid sailor-man. He conceived the idea of getting together some of these boys round the city of Melbourne who wanted to go to sea as a profession, and giving them some sort of preliminary training which would be of assistance to them when they got a ship. He selected them from his sea scouts, on the Albert Park Lake; those of the sea scouts who still felt the call of the sea strongly when school and scouting days were drawing to a close were encouraged to stay on as "merchant service cadets" and to carry on their training; other boys, as they drifted along, were included if the Captain saw with his eagle eye that they were worthy. It was his hobby, this merchant service cadets' association. It was the happiest organisation that I ever belonged to. We met on Saturday afternoons and upon one evening during the week; I think it was Tuesday. There was a little clubhouse on the shores of the Albert Park Lake, with a lecture room, a sail loft, a boat shed, and a garden. There were pictures and models of ships everywhere—all sailing ships. There was such a delightful and completely nautical air about the place that old shipmasters, and indeed the very venerable Ancient

Mariners' Society itself, were glad to meet there upon occasion. There were ships' bells, ships' wheels, all the flags of the international code strung across the old ceiling, a small capstan in one corner; we had a big old lifeboat that had once done duty at Melbourne Heads and which the Captain had rigged into a little brigantine, with yards and braces and everything, and we used to sail round the Albert Park Lake on Saturday afternoons to the consternation of the racing yachts and the deep interest of passers-by. We had three yachts, and several rowing boats of different kinds; these were shared with the sea scouts. There was an old bos'n who taught us to splice and to use a sail needle; the Captain himself sailed the brigantine and gave us weekly lessons in nautical subjects. He did not try to teach us too much. He did not try to teach us things that practical experience aboard ship would afterwards teach us better. His aim was to make us useful boys for a master to have aboard his ship; we were good signallers, dependable in any kind of a boat; we knew what rope-yarn was and the difference between a fid and a marlinspike. We knew the compass and could reel off the names of the sails of a four-masted barque without any trouble. We could trim a lamp, make a long splice and a rolling hitch, and tell you the difference between a ketch and a schooner.

The Captain kept a careful eye on his boys—I suppose there would be about twenty of us, ranging from about fourteen to perhaps seventeen—and, as his daily duties brought him aboard an unending procession of ships and into contact with an unending procession of their masters, he kept an eye on them also. He believed

in sail training, and his object was to find vacancies for the boys, as they were fit to go to sea, in the half-decks of sailing ships. He would not, unless absolutely compelled, send a boy to sea first in a steamer. He said that if a boy went first in a sailing ship and afterwards in a steamer, that was not so bad. He had at least been once on the real sea. But if he went in a steamer first he was doomed. The incomparable softness of the life, the complete difference between the conditions of the steamship's boy and the boy of square-rig, were such that the boy who had once tasted the delights of steam and afterwards went into sail was strong-charactered indeed.

At that time there still survived a number of small barques and barquentines which traded mostly in the Tasman Sea, between Australia and New Zealand, carrying coal across from Newcastle, New South Wales, to Auckland and to Wellington, and bringing back timber from Hokianga, Greymouth, Wanganui, Timaru, or some other of the host of lovely places round New Zealand. These were the Captain's special hunting ground, and their masters were mostly his personal friends. He sent us also in deepwater square-riggers, when the opportunity arose. But he was very careful about the ships he sent us in. He didn't believe in boys being bound 'prentice, aboard limejuice ships; he said the system was all wrong. They were sometimes little better than the ship's slaves, and the system of paying premiums for lessons and experience which the boys never received did not appeal to him. He had been through that school himself. Neither did he believe in boys making their first voyage in the foc'sle. His ideal was a little barque or full-rigged ship that

carried a half-deck for boys who signed as cadets and were not apprenticed to her owners. They were free agents; they could go to other ships, when they had served a voyage or two. They were not in the foc'sle, under the influence of the men, most of whom were foreigners and apt to be somewhat drunken in port. At sea they were all right and their influence was splendid, but in port the foc'sle was no place for a young boy.

There were some ships which carried such half-decks, largely owing to the fact, I think, that Captain Suffern had talked their masters into it. It was an excellent idea. I know of several masters who became so enthusiastic over the Captain's scheme that they actually put little half-decks in their ships, for his cadets. The barque *Rothesay Bay* was an old-timer in which many of his boys cut their maritime teeth; the full-rigger *Cardinia,* lost later in the Fiji's, was another favourite. There were other vessels—the barquentines *Lindstol, Amelia J., Southern Cross;* the barques *Inverneil* and the *John Murray;* the *White Pine, James Craig, Daniel, Handa Isle.* Another advantage of the Tasman Sea trade was that the Captain could keep an eye on the boys; they were back again at the old headquarters after a voyage, and he could see how they shaped and hear the masters' reports of them. It was a fine work the old man was doing, and while at the time we boys appreciated it mostly from the point of view of the vista of adventure it opened for us, looking back now, one sees that that was of least importance. It was a valuable and soundly patriotic work; the man believed that sail training made the best sailors. He knew Australia would want sailors—its own

sailors—if it was to build up a mercantile marine. He saw that it was hard for Australian boys to go to sea. He made it easier for them to get the training which would best help them to build up their nation; nor was he concerned only with the Commonwealth of Australia. He know that the scheme could well be applied to the British merchant service generally, although the proportion of Britishers there was, and is, steadily mounting. It applied to the whole calling of the sea, indeed, and was not a matter of nations: the high posts of the sea called for the best training available, and that was sail. With the passing of the sailing ship, boys drifted into steam and stayed there, never getting the classic ground work of their calling that is only to be obtained in sail. In a small way, and yet a very efficient and important one, Captain Suffern put his ideals into practice, at a great deal of inconvenience to himself and at considerable expense and infinite trouble.

The scheme failed. The Captain died while I was at sea once, and it broke down forthwith. Ill luck pursued it, with maddening determination. Boy after boy lost his life; ship after ship was lost. Of the twenty boys who went to these nautical lectures when I was there, not one now is at sea. They have all either left the sea or are dead. Most are dead. Two of them were in a little barquentine—the *Amelia J.;* Walpole and Lee Archer were their names—which set out from Newcastle with coal for Tasmania and never arrived. Two others were killed in the rigging of the *Lindstol;* one was drowned in Valparaiso Bay, from the *Cardinia;* one or two went when the barque *Manurewa* went missing with all hands; one

died with the *Southern Cross*, lost mysteriously somewhere between Melbourne and Tasmania. Six were wrecked out of a full-rigged ship. Some, after a voyage or two in the Tasman Sea trade, went into deepwater in all kinds of ships, and the Lord knows what became of them. The remnant has left the sea long since.

It was the purest and most regrettable ill luck. We went to sea, of course, right at the end of sail; if the ships were not lost they were soon hulked or broken up. No more came to take their places. It was a bad time, not only for ships. The postwar years were years of disorder, worry, and disintegration; it was no time for a boy to be learning the rudiments of the sea. The merchant service of Australia steadily declined, and the prospects of a sea career around that coast were not bright. Labour troubles, political disturbances, economic stress, lost ships, broken-up ships, laid-up ships, worried companies—these things combined with the ghastly tragedies of the deaths of many of the boys, followed by the death of the Captain, to break the scheme down completely and leave of it almost nothing at all. . . .

Some of the boys had the most bitter ill-fortune. I know one of them who went to sea in a British full-rigger —best left unnamed—in 1918; she loaded wheat in Adelaide for the Channel for orders. Most of her apprentices ran away, and her master was glad to ship one of Captain Suffern's boys in the halfdeck to supplement his crew. There were six in the halfdeck—two old boys who had been four years in the ship and stayed only because it would have been madness to desert and lose all that time; two other apprentices who had formerly deserted

from another ship of the same line; a young Adelaide boy and the boy from Captain Suffern's. These last were both fourteen; when the ship put to sea, they found themselves the only sober persons aboard. It was rather terrifying, one of them wrote afterwards; but their chief bitterness lay, a few days afterwards, in the knowledge that they had to go on with that ship to England, and God knew where from there, without hope of escape from her or relief from the shocking hardness of the life. The ship was ill-manned, although she had a big crew. She was very badly off for gear; she had been run to a standstill, and then sent to sea again. The crew were abominably fed. The apprentices were worse off than dogs, since if they had been dogs they would at least have been able to crawl off somewhere and get a night's rest now and again. The master was a drunken man who was not seen much on deck; he never took the slightest notice of the occupants of his halfdeck. The chief mate was morose and taciturn, but a decent sort. Unhappily for them, the two new boys were not in his watch. They were in the second mate's watch, and the second mate was a most unpleasant fellow. He was a grand hail-fellow-well-met with the foremast hands, but he achieved much of that by tyranny over the apprentices. They could not hit back! They could do nothing; in the foc'sle the men skulked by night, when the second mate had the deck, and sneaked to smoke by day. The apprentices did the dirty work and much of the other work as well; it was not unusual, clewing up the royals, for one of them to be sent to the mizzen royal alone, two to the fore, and then when they came down from their respective

masts, all three to the main, while the ordinary seamen and A.B.'s of the foc'sle stood around and joked. The apprentices were not allowed to splice, or serve, or even to steer. They did the ship's rotten jobs, cleaning out lavatories and pig sties and getting up coal for the cook, cleaning brass and holystoning the poop on their knees. The ship was bound around the Horn; she was a hundred and seventy-four days on the voyage—a voyage about which the less said the better. The young South Australian apprentice was killed; the other boy told us things afterwards, that made his death appear atrociously like murder. The second mate sent him aloft to tar down the main royal footrope while the ship was running heavily, down below 50 South, on the way to Cape Horn. There was a fair sea and she was rolling badly; it was a dangerous job, even for an experienced sailor. More than that, it was a wholly unnecessary job. Tarring footropes should be left to sunny days and the Trade Winds, as every sailor knows; if it is done in other stormier regions the tar is a long time drying, and the yard is dangerous to go out on. The footrope ought to be sent down on deck and properly overhauled before it is tarred; the second mate pleaded afterwards that it was punishment because the boy had tried to defy his authority. The royal was set at the time and the boy had to climb right to the top of the mast and lie out on the footropes in an entirely unsupported manner; a lurch of the ship caught him as he was changing his grip and he pitched into the sea. They said that he struck something on the way down; they hoped he had . . . There was no inquiry.

The ship went afterwards to Norway and loaded timber for South Africa, and here Captain Suffern's boy deserted and made his way back to Australia in a steamer, thoroughly disgusted with his experiences in the full-rigger but at the same time knowing that that was not typical, and having found much that was lovable and intensely moving about the life. He went to sea again in sail, and in the end sailed upon the same road as the others.

I went to sea in a little barque called the *Rothesay Bay*. She was about seven hundred tons, homely, bluff-bowed, by no means among the loveliest of her class, nor yet the lowliest. She belonged to a Sydney timber firm, and traded between different ports of Australia and New Zealand. She had been built in Dumbarton, I think, about forty years before I joined her, and had once flown the Norwegian flag under the name of *Activ*. The name was quite misleading. She was not much as a sailer; we were about seven months, I remember, on a voyage from Edithburgh, in South Australia, with gypsum for discharge at Whangarei, going down from there to load timber at Auckland for Sydney. We were, if I remember rightly, about two months putting out that gypsum, shifting down to Auckland, and loading the timber. It might have been longer. Then we were something like forty days or so from Auckland to Sydney—a voyage that a slow steamer might cover against a strong head wind in six days. We were short of food and the ship had been loaded badly and was cranky; we struck nothing but head winds and could carry little sail. The master was very ill with cancer, and his heroic wife did what she could for him. The mate, a splendid old fellow with one eye, who had lost

more ships round the Australian coast than any other master mariner—he's dead now, rest his bones!—sailed her. His policy was caution—always caution. We sailed under the lower tops'ls most of the way; there was a big deck cargo, and it was more important to deliver that than to get the ship to port quickly. In the end if a tug had not picked us up a hundred miles or so from Sydney, I don't know when we might have arrived. We might still have been drifting somewhere round the Tasman Sea.

There were five boys in the halfdeck, and although the old ship made us suffer something, we loved her none the less for that. She was no classic clipper—nothing, indeed, but a poor old barque, hard-worked and sore-driven, but she was lovely in our sight always. I remember, the first few days at sea, being struck by the vivid differences between the actual thing and all that I had imagined about it previously! Why hadn't someone written about the real sea? I thought; for then I should not have gone! The broken sleep, the cold, the wet, the poor food and wet bunks, the misery of the soulless and endless pitch against unchanging head winds, the unutterable horror of days of seasickness unrelieved by anything save work and an hour or two, now and then, in a sodden bunk—why had I never read about these! *They* were the sea—not romance, and not adventure!

But when the seasickness passed and a fair wind came, it was not so bad. It was winter then, and the Tasman Sea is an unpleasant place when it takes it into its head to be ill-mannered upon a winter's day; we spent some thoroughly wretched days getting clear of the Australian

coast, and then in a head wind that persisted round Cape Brett, in New Zealand, for a week or so. There were grand attractions about the life, though, and it was fine to feel that one belonged to a real ship, going somewhere. We delighted in the work in the rigging, when the weather was not wet, and managed to scheme something extra out of the cook upon occasions—not always when he was looking. The captain's wife, lovely lady, took a great interest in us which we resented at first, being such grown-up and important men in our estimation—we were about fifteen—but came to cherish and deeply admire later on. The war had played up badly with both her and her husband; they did not long survive it.

They left in Sydney, and the captain died. We left, too. So did the old mate, because he did not like the new master; they put a big donkey boiler on the old *Rothesay Bay's* decks, and she ran into a steamer not long afterwards.

Through the kindly offices of the old mate, I secured a job then as ordinary seaman in the foc'sle of a little barque bound to Tasmania. Her skipper was a broad Scotchman and a cousin or two of his occupied the foc'sle; other clansmen were stationed in various capacities throughout the ship. They occupied their time in port chiefly in the diversions of drinking whisky and blowing wailing tunes on a thing they called a chantey or something. I preferred their drinking whisky. The bos'n was an old reprobate named Sandy McNab; the skipper was Murdo' Murchison. In the foc'sle we had Donal' Murchison and Alec McEacharn and a few more of them. I never sailed with finer shipmates; they were fine men,

and she was a beautiful barque. We sailed in her to Hobart and she nearly sank on the way, in a blow off Gabo, compelling us to run back to Sydney in distress and lie there at anchor another six weeks or so while the topsides were repaired and the barque made more seaworthy. She had been a hulk in New Guinea for years and then was rigged again—a sad mistake, from a business point of view—and sent to sea.

Eventually we arrived safely at Hobart and later loaded heavy timber at Port Huon for South Australia. The skipper's wife and two little children joined at Hobart and Sandy McNab cleared out, not holding with "wimmin an' kids 'board any craft"; on the way across from the south of Tasmania to Port Pirie we struck very heavy weather compelling us to heave-to, and an old Finn was knocked unconscious in the scuppers by a big sea.

From Port Pirie we sailed to Port Adelaide, there loading superphosphates for Auckland, and in Auckland we loaded timber for Melbourne. The barque did not leak again; we had always plenty of good food to eat; she was a homely little waggon and the skipper's small daughter used often to come running along the deck to talk and play with the sailors, talking with a broad Highland accent although she was born in Australia. Little Jock, who could scarcely walk, insisted on standing his trick at the wheel; there was not much room for children aboard a ship like that, but we were a happy family and got on well together. She was, in many ways, the happiest ship that I have sailed in. The quarters were good; we had enough to eat; she sailed well and was easily handled; she

GETTING IN THE MAIN UPPER TOPGALLANT SAIL

BENDING THE MAIN ROYAL IN THE TROPICS

came round beautifully under all conditions, and was a little beauty to steer. She did not ship much water and was small and handy aloft. We carried enough crew, and they were all decent fellows.

She was registered in the port of Sydney, but there were not many Australians in the crew. In addition to the Highlanders there were some Scandinavians, a Canadian, a Londoner, and a Belgian.

And then we came into Melbourne, when I had been about six months aboard, and there were two big deep-water four-masted barques there. I left the little barque, and a few days later tramped round the foc'sle head of a big four-masted barque bound deep-laden with wheat to Falmouth for orders, getting up her anchor in Hobson's Bay. Nor was I alone from the little barque; three other former shipmates also shipped in the big Cape Horner.

The four-masted barque was a magnificent big vessel, carrying something like five thousand tons of wheat; we went out into the stream from the Williamstown piers on Christmas Eve, 1920, but it was not until the new year that we went finally to sea. In the interval there had been a mutiny aboard, all over as insignificant a thing as the foc'sle kettle, and we left a cockney A.B. behind in gaol over it; we had also gathered in our foc'sle as motley a collection of gentlemen as ever slept upon its bug-ridden bunks. Most were Scandinavians of some kind or other; there were also Russians, a Mexican, an American or two, a New Zealander, Canadian, Belgian, Peruvian, Maltese, and here and there an Englishman.

We sailed by way of the Cape of Good Hope and were 151 days on the voyage, about sixty of which we spent

in the North Atlantic. It was a fine weather voyage. There was no Cape Horn, and there was little bad weather, except for a blow somewhere in the longitude of Mauritius in the Indian and some hard stuff again up in the North Atlantic. It was summer when we passed across the Indian Ocean, summer when we came round Good Hope, summer again in the North Atlantic, and summer again when at last we reached our destination. There was too much good weather. It would have been better if there had been some bad. The captain had forgotten to replenish the slopchest supply of tobacco in Melbourne, and from the eleventh day at sea almost to the end of the voyage, the crew had to do without their smokes and there were some awful tempers in consequence. Being an English ship, there never was too much to eat, and their pipes were the only pleasure the unfortunate crew had. With nothing to put in these, it is not surprising that they became thoroughly fed up. They tried all sorts of substitutes, after the first shock of the horrible news had subsided somewhat; they scraped up moss from the ship's side and mixed it, dried in the sun, with ropeyarns; they dried used tea leaves, and smoked them; they compounded fearsome concoctions of ropeyarns and molasses, mixed with wood shavings and the trimmings of their beards—but they never found anything that passed remotely as a substitute for tobacco. The sailmaker held stubbornly to dried tea leaves, and turned yellower of countenance as the voyage progressed; the crew reached such a state that they came to look with aversion and open dislike upon those of us younger ones who did not suffer from the pangs of tortured cravings because the tobacco had no hold on

us. We did not join in the common suffering. They realised that to allow consideration of that fact to influence them in their friendship towards us was bitterly unfair and wrong; but it *did* influence them for all that. We were not one common band. We did not share all things alike . . . The food was short afterwards, as well, but that was of little importance compared with the tobacco.

The crew waited upon the Old Man, in the stronghold of his poop, upon numerous occasions, until he came thoroughly to detest the whole position. They demanded that he should put into Cape Town, but he said he would not; who ever heard of a big four-masted barque making a distress call for a sea stock of tobacco? Cape Town passed—a few hundred miles off—they waited again and demanded a call at St. Helena. The Old Man said he would go there if there was a chance; it was practically in our course. They did not believe him. He tried to make St. Helena, for all the disbelief and pessimism of the foc'sle—for was he not himself also without tobacco? —and we actually hove-to off the island. A bumboat came out but had nothing save a few beads and fruit; we wanted no truck like that. The boat's crew said they would go into the land and bring tobacco out for us, and set off to do so. They wanted to leave one of their number in the ship as a guarantee of good faith, as it was then coming on night and they feared the ship might grow tired of waiting and slip away. The captain would not hear of any such hostage and we waited and waited, hove-to but gradually drifting away from the land. There was no sign of the boat, and at length after midnight,

after sending up flares and getting no answer, we reluctantly squared her before it again and continued the voyage—still without the precious tobacco.

The feelings of the crew were now bitter in the extreme, and it was with an ill grace that they worked. The second mate was a boy who had been apprentice in the ship for four years and knew nothing else of the sea; he was just out of his time. The shellbacks in his watch openly scoffed at him, and in the night watches pleased themselves as to how much of his orders they obeyed, particularly at the braces, slacking away and belaying according to their own judgment and not in accordance with the orders of the second mate. As their judgment was always very much sounder than the second mate's and they knew a great deal more about the job, there was no harm done. The mate was an old, old reprobate who had been all his life in sail. He had even less confidence in the second mate than the starboard watch had, and upon one famous occasion, when the second mate was clewing up the royals in a squall in the southeast trades, came up out of his watch below and swore at him, in a thunderous voice, for quite five minutes, to the infinite joy of the crew and the woe of the unfortunate ex-apprentice second mate. After that, of course, his authority counted for nothing, except with the other apprentices who had to submit to his ruling. The mate was a fine old sailor but he didn't care a hang about the ship. There was not much work done aboard.

We had a very bad spell in the doldrums, making only about five degrees in three weeks. Fortunately, we caught a good many albacore and bonito and had something to

eat; here, too, we encountered a Norwegian full-rigger called the *Maletta*, bound from Algoa Bay to Falmouth for orders, and from her we obtained a few weeks' supply of tobacco. That was a day! There was wild excitement when the tobacco came aboard, but no attempt to conserve it, and we were without a smoke again almost before we were clear of the doldrums. One day before the *Maletta* came into view the skipper sent for'ard to say that he would give two ounces of tobacco to any man who would make him a model of the ship in a bottle. His niece was in the ship, making the passage with him; he wanted the model ship for her. The crew to a man sent back the message by the steward that he could go to Hades. They would make him no sulphurous model although their tongues were hanging out for a smoke. They did not care for the niece, who trod the poop haughtily and frowned upon the lot of us as if we were the scum of the earth. There might have been some among us qualified for that title, in ports ashore, but not at sea; at sea there never was a better man than foc'sle Jack, even in his drunkenest and foulest days. The ports spoiled him, not ships and the sea. This girl appeared to have gathered all her knowledge of sailors from books which regarded them as sea carrion, and although she had many opportunities, never manifested any desire to correct her false impressions. Upon great occasions she sometimes spoke to the second mate. She never spoke a word to any of the dwellers of the foc'sle throughout the voyage; the crew had a grudge against her because she wanted fool things done, at inappropriate moments, in order that she could photograph them. It rankled to have to come out in a

broiling sun from a decent job of splicing or something and fool round aloft with a tops'l for a blessed girl to take a photograph; she was by no means popular, though I don't suppose that troubled her.

In the North Atlantic the master became seriously ill and the sailing of the ship devolved on the mate. He was equal to it; he could sail her. We were over four months out then and still a long way from the Channel. One day, near the end of the northeast trades, we saw a ship afire. We saw distinctly the red glow during the night, and the lookout and the helmsman both saw a rocket go up. In the morning there she was, not so far away, out on the lee quarter with a fine wind to run down to her and see what was wrong. It was a beautiful sunny day with a gentle breeze and a serenely blue sea; the trade was dying then, but there was wind enough to run down to the burning ship and at least investigate. We would not have lost four hours; the voyage was already spoilt as far as time was concerned.

But we didn't go. We sailed on, and left that burning ship to her fate, because none of the officers had seen her and they would not believe the protestations of the crew. They pooh-poohed what we said; *they* had seen no rockets, no red glare. It was an auxiliary ship under steam, they said. The mate's eyesight was bad; he could see little at any time. The second mate parroted whatever the master said. The master himself was a sick man and did not come up from below until the morning, when the ship was farther off than it had been during the night. He refused utterly to believe that it was a ship afire, and we

sailed on. The crew was ugly about it and there were ugly scenes. But what could they do?

There were bitter words in the foc'sle. There were some who said it was a typical English attitude. Because the foremast hands raised the alarm there was nothing in it. If it was a case of poop against foc'sle, poop must rule whatever was at stake. . . . There was talk of mutiny, but that is madness, even to-day, even when the lives of others may be at stake.

With the crew now openly contemptuous of their officers, the big barque sailed on. We left the other ship, whatever and whoever she was, to her fate, though it would at least have been only human to have investigated the matter a little more closely, especially when there was so strong a suspicion that she was afire. We were not certain, of course; none of us could say definitely that she was on fire. But we all could say, most emphatically, that the master should have put back and looked.

Another month or so and we left the ship, well pleased to be rid of her. She never sailed under the British flag again; she has been broken up a few years now. Some of us had taken the latitude and longitude on the day we saw the burning ship—we had it from one of the apprentices who helped the second mate work it out that day—and, arrived at last in London, made inquiries. We learnt that a Danish barque, named the *Lysglimt*, had actually been abandoned on that very day, at that very latitude and longitude, so seriously afire that her crew could no longer stay aboard her. A four-masted barque, it was reported, had left her to her fate; the crew were

some time in their lifeboats before they were picked up, and some of them died, if I remember rightly.

That was our "auxiliary ship," which that four-masted barque would not help because the foc'sle saw the need and the poop did not. It was a thoroughly disgraceful episode which probably has few equals in the history of the British merchant service.

Being then very young and very inexperienced, I thought that something ought to be done about it. So did two others of the crew who were also in London—a young Tasmanian and a young Englishman. We thought that we would go along to Lloyds and report the occurrence, and clear at least the crew of the four-masted barque from any horrible suspicion of unconcernedly leaving a burning ship to her fate. We went to Lloyds, the three of us. We had some difficulty in getting in. There were stout commissionaires paid to keep out people like us; they smiled with an air of great knowledge at our attempts to explain our business. We had to come back three times before we were able to see someone in charge.

It was a most unsatisfactory interview. The gentlemen who saw us were plainly not impressed. I had my own log of the voyage, and the entry for that day, with the latitude and longitude, was signed by the crew. We read this entry, and pointed out, from Lloyds' own reports, that the *Lysglimt* was abandoned there that day after our ship had passed her by.

The gentlemen listened with no interest. They asked a few irrelevant questions. And then one had a most brilliant brain wave.

"Ha," he said, with a sly wink to his confrères, "I would be telling the truth, would I not, if I suggested that you had something against this captain of yours? You did not like him, eh? You would like your own back, isn't that it?"

He leant back and surveyed us.

"Yes," answered the Englishman, sheepishly, and grinned. I tried to get a kick at him to warn him not to give that answer, not to answer that question at all. What had that to do with it? What did we care about the captain, anyway? We had no grudge against him, although the *Lysglimt's* people may have had, and the smokers of the four-masted barque's personnel may have had.

But the answer was given, the gentleman was highly pleased with himself and his "strategy," and the interview was over. Nothing was ever done about it. . . .

I was stranded in London, after that, for some time. The world was somewhat upset in those days, and London was not a pleasant place for such as I. There were shipping strikes, and coal strikes, and so on; it was a good thing it was summer. There was a Peruvian four-masted barque lying in the Thames, moored at some buoys off Woolwich, chartered to load coal at Barry Dock for Callao. She had German officers and a coloured crew. I had a job aboard to "work by," but the coal strike killed her charter and she could not go to sea. Times were hard. An influenza epidemic came, and did not go. There were no jobs in ships, and there were no jobs ashore. I was seventeen.

Eventually I heard of a Finnish four-masted barque lying in Bordeaux that would probably be going out to Australia in ballast. Her name was *Lawhill.* I had never heard of her. I knew nothing about her, nor about Finnish ships, except that "Russian" Finns were supposed to possess supernatural powers over the wind and to be rather ready with the knife. I went over to Bordeaux, in a little cargo steamer, to ship in this four-masted barque, and got a job. She was a fine big ship with a very small crew—so small, indeed, that when we towed down the river from Bordeaux to put out to sea I had some slight doubts as to whether we should complete the voyage. I had been used to English ships, which whatever might be said against them, had always plenty of men aboard.

The Finns might have had unorthodox ideas about the manning of their ships, but they certainly knew how to sail them, I found. We sailed from Bordeaux to Port Lincoln, South Australia, in seventy-four days, which was not bad for a ship never built as a clipper. Indeed, a clipper of the real days of sail might not have scoffed at such a passage. We had enough to eat, though we had, if my memory serves me well—as it ought to, since this was only about eight years ago—only seven in a watch and these were all boys. I had my eighteenth birthday somewhere in the South Indian Ocean, nearing the end of the voyage, and I was one of the six A.B.'s. Still, she was a good ship and a very tractable one, and we came to the end of the voyage with no damage done. Then, however, we sailed up on the beach outside Port Lincoln, and I met with a fall there, not very serious but

bad enough to put me out of action for a while. The *Lawhill* lay in Port Lincoln for some weeks, after she was towed off the shore, and later sailed round to Port Adelaide to load wheat for Queenstown for orders. I left her there, as soon as I could walk.

My wages when I signed on in Bordeaux were, I was told, £2 a month. Finmarks were then about two hundred and fifty to the pound, and I accepted my wages in them hoping that the exchange would improve on the course of the voyage and so make my five hundred finmarks monthly worth more in English money than £2. But the exchange did not improve; it became much worse, and when I came to pay off eventually in Port Adelaide, I found myself, what with slopchest account and one deduction and another, almost in debt to the ship. I had my bare fare back to Melbourne out of it all.

I went back to Melbourne by express. I remember that I found a corner seat in a railway carriage at Adelaide about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and did not rise from it until after 9 o'clock the next morning, in Melbourne. It was some time before I could go to sea again, and I felt that I had had enough of sail—deepwater sail, at any rate. The fall was not serious but it was nerve-racking. Any fall is, I suppose. I tried to get a job in a steamer but found it very difficult in the port of Melbourne then. It was no better in Sydney. Then a strike came, and the steamers were all tied up.

After about two months I managed to secure a job in a small schooner, bound from Melbourne to Launceston, in Tasmania.

I think that was the worst ship I ever sailed in. She

was a lovely little schooner, painted white, of about ninety-five tons. Her name was the *Hawk*, and she had, I believe, been a pilot schooner at Melbourne Heads in the old days. There was nothing of the pilot schooner about her in my time. The crew consisted of a master—a young stern-featured man who largely owned her; he had been in that kind of craft all his life and was finally drowned in another little sailer, called the *Lialeeta*, a few years later; and a tough personage, stout and drunken, who was known as the mate but had, I suspected, learnt what he knew about the sea (and that was not much) from looking at ships in port from the safety of a waterfront pub, and not from sailing in them. He was the boss stevedore in port and took charge of the cargo handling. I think he had more experience of that than of handling sails. There was also a half-wit who had joined in Launceston. The complement was rounded off by a lame and morose individual who was described as cook but never did any cooking, except when we other unfortunates were handling the cargo in port. He had, he said, been in every doss-house in Melbourne. I believe him. At sea we cooked for ourselves. It was the toughest life I had come across.

We loaded a full cargo of superphosphates, in bags, at Yarraville, and when that was all aboard, took in a deck cargo of cased benzine on top. Then we lashed the galley above the benzine, a little river steamer towed us to a bay anchorage, and in the middle of the night we put to sea. Work! I thought I knew what work was before I shipped there. I discovered with lamentable certainty that I had previously not known the least thing about it. We worked the cargo in port, with a sad defi-

ciency of hands; we sailed the ship at sea, watch and watch at night and all hands on deck—five of us—all day. It blew a snorting gale in Bass Straits and the schooner leaked, for all her copper sheathing. We were constantly at the pump, a decrepit and inefficient arrangement that could not cope with the water coming in. The rotten leach of the rotten mains'l carried away. We had, in the end, to run in distress back for Melbourne Heads and were lucky to get there. We set out again, as soon as the mains'l was repaired and the wind dropped a bit, and this second time actually reached Launceston after a run of two days. It was a thoroughly miserable life. We lived in a little wet hutch down below the main deck for'ard; there was nothing to eat but some foul salt junk in a harness cask and what fish we caught. The half-wit, thank heavens, was a good fisherman. There was nothing else he was good at. The doss-house inhabitant could not steer.

In Launceston we put out the benzine, which fortunately had not blown up on us, and the superphosphates, and shifted down the Tamar River to various small outports where we loaded sawn timber, heavy stuff that seeped with gum. Then we sailed across to Melbourne again, sneaking across the straits when the wind wasn't looking, and arrived there a day or two before Christmas Eve. The master informed us that there would be a bonus for us if we got the cargo out by Christmas Eve. We worked hard, and got it out. Then he paid us all off, telling us our jobs would be there again if we came down after the holidays. I neglected to visit the schooner again to see if he meant it.

I was afterwards in steam for a while, in a collier around the Australian coast, trading mostly between Melbourne and Newcastle, with occasional visits to Geelong, and later in one of the Australian Government's cargo tramps, trading to England. In the collier there was constant trouble. At the time Australia was the seaman's mecca, with its excellent conditions for seafarers and its high wages. There were none better than Australian ships, but though they certainly had the best conditions, they seemed chiefly noted for possessing the most discontented crews on earth. There was always trouble in that collier. We had splendid conditions. There were three watches for sailors and firemen alike, plenty to eat, well-ventilated roomy foc'sles, a messroom for the sailors and another for the firemen, bedding supplied, washed and changed for us each week—I suspect that some of those Liverpool buckos and Cockney skiters who had so much to say about everything (but never a word complimentary) had never seen bedclothes changed in their lives before—excellent food, good wages. We had about £16 a month as able seamen, which was easily brought up to £20 and more with overtime. The conditions in that ship were what they ought to be internationally, in all ships, but they bred only contempt in those gentry. A man was judged by the trouble he caused and not by his proficiency as a seaman. I discovered that the union had much more to do with getting a job than any question of experience or dependability. A mate was frowned on who chose men for himself in preference to those the union sent to him. The bos'n had the nominal running of the crew, but he went in fear of his life as he also was

a member of the union, and if he did not hand out overtime enough or spoke roughly to the men, he might easily find himself hauled before some inquisitorial meeting and told curtly to "explain," knowing only too well that no explanations would avail. The men boasted openly of the ships they had held up and the methods of job control they had "put over." Most had been in the Commonwealth's ships, which apparently were a training ground for such tactics as they pursued. They boasted of the cargoes they had broached, the delays they had caused, the humiliations they had inflicted on their officers. Their boastings were founded on fact. They had done the things they talked about, and were prepared to do them again.

I was not long in this collier. She was delayed at almost every port we visited. In the end the owners sickened of it and tied her up, giving the lot of us off and paying our fares back to Melbourne, as they were bound to do. Preposterous as it may sound, the final trouble arose over a bottle of pickles. We received our pickles, in the collier, in big stone jars. They were perfectly good pickles, and that was a perfectly good way of giving them to us. But one night in Newcastle a fireman, in the usual state of his calling, noticed in a dockside restaurant that the pickles—the only other place he had ever seen any—were in neat glass jars. Coming aboard drunk afterwards, he kicked the stone jar over the side and demanded that we should have our pickles also in glass jars. The ship was about to put to sea. The steward had no other pickles. He promised to get them in glass jars in Geelong, which was to be our next port; poor

devil, he was in the hands of those profane unthinkables. They weren't Australians, thank heavens. There was no Australian amongst them; they were, for the most part, Irishmen who had renounced their nationality and their native fields for the slums of Liverpool, pleasant fellows who had never heard and never uttered a sentence in their beastly lives that was not full of foulest profanity, whose idea of joy was to become foully drunk and remain so as long as possible. The steward could not grant their demand. He could not tell them to go to hell. Neither could anyone else in the ship, of which they were virtually the masters. The sailors supported them in their demand. The ship was held up, of course, all over these stupid pickles, and when they heard of it, the sickened owners tied her up indefinitely and got rid of the lot of us.

I was sorry for my splendid country, going down to Melbourne in the express with those fellows. There seemed something wrong with democracy, that these things should happen. One believed in justice for the underdog, of course, and the principles of unionism are sound.

But the practice, at least in ships around the Australian coast, certainly wasn't.

In the Commonwealth ship things were little better, although the class of men was several grades higher. In the forty-five-odd aboard, there must have been three Australians. We loaded wheat at Port Lincoln and Wallaroo for Las Palmas for orders, going there by way of Albany, Cape Town, and Dakar. At Las Palmas there were no orders and we steamed on to Falmouth, discharging the cargo eventually in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Then we loaded

coal in the Bristol Channel ports for a place in French Somali Land, and came back to Australia. The crew did pretty much what they pleased and the officers had little authority. Still, we drifted along well enough; deepwater is better than the coast, and the men were mostly decent sorts. Apparently the firebrands preferred to remain on the coast and did not care to ship in deepwater. The firemen were a better lot than those of the collier, although I was much struck one day by a chance remark one of them made, which throws a great deal of light upon their characters and their outlook on life.

The conversation was about wives and was mostly unprintable. Up spoke a Liverpool fireman: "Yez ought to see my wife. Blime, when she's all dressed up an' goin' out you'd think she was a flash 'ore!"

He thought that was the highest praise conceivable, as did also most of his listeners . . .

The steamer loaded wool at various Australian ports for the next voyage, to discharge at Antwerp and London. A few days past Colombo on the homeward voyage serious fire broke out, and she reached Colombo only in the nick of time with smoke pouring out of the after holds and the decks red hot. She was scuttled there, and did not go to sea again under the Commonwealth's flag. I think she was repaired and sold to Greece or Japan or somewhere; I don't know. I was fed up with the sea then, and chucked it in.

What was the use? Sail was done: the conditions on the Australian coast were not such as to induce any Australian youth to carry on with the career with any idea of rising in it. The foc'sle was the best place, but

that could not go on. The deplorable frequency of labour troubles, coupled with economic conditions which drove more and more of the coastal ships into foreign hands, did not make the outlook for a sea career at all bright. There was, of course, the Commonwealth Line, but that was in a bad way and always subject to the whims of governments. It was not stable. There was no stability in the profession. The master of the ship was the navigator and the officers his assistants; the firemen and the sailors ran her. One could be sure of one's job in the foc'sle only by the record of one's association with disturbances and troubles of all kinds; what was there to strive for abaft the mast? There were good companies, of course, but there was also an excellent supply of officers for such jobs as they offered. The outlook was not wholly black, but it was dark enough.

My experience of the sea was perhaps both limited and unfortunate, but it was enough to persuade me that it was not the best of professions. The times were upset and far from normal. I went to sea at the wrong time, of course. The ships I sailed in were stranded, or driven ashore, or laid up, or burnt. It did not look as if the sea was for me.

I flung it in, a little before I was twenty, and took to the land, going back to sea again only from a journalistic point of view, once or twice—though still working before the mast—and never with the idea of again taking up the profession. I went back for a while in a Norwegian whaler, in 1923-24, for a cruise to the Antarctic after blue whales, and again in the *Herzogin Cecilie* in 1928, for the story of her race with the *Beatrice;* and once more

again in the *Grace Harwar* for the grain race of 1929.

I have digressed and gone into all these various details with the idea of helping, perhaps, in the presentation of the picture of the sea to be painted from the *Grace Harwar's* voyage. The sea is no highroad of romance and adventure; it is a calling beset with commonplace difficulties and tragedies and sufferings of mind as well as body, and troubles, misunderstandings, problems and the like, just as any profession or calling of the land.

But it has its happiness too, its sunshine and its rain; and if I may not want very much to go to sea again, I am glad that I have been.

CHAPTER XIII

BETTER DAYS

BECAUSE all hope of reaching Cape Town was snatched from us and we were so far from the South American coast, we carried on in the hope of encountering some steamer which could lend us a hand. There also was some despairing fatalism in our going on; so much had happened to us, that we did not worry about anything further turning up to increase the load. We might as well go on, and hang it.

We did not again try to head towards Cape Town when better weather came; we were driven hundreds of miles northwards and westwards then, and it might have taken us as long to reach either Cape Town, in one direction, or Montevideo in the other, as it would take to carry on and come to the shipping routes. The sailer makes most of her voyage from Australia clear of all shipping routes; away from the North Atlantic and the seaboards of the continents, the ocean is still a lonely place—lonelier, indeed, than it ever was before, because of the fact that the steamships hold to such well-defined routes. The steamer travels over the shortest line between two ports, irrespective of other considerations; in the days of sail, shipping wandered at the will of the wind over the sea face, and penetrated to far corners. It is not unlikely that the sailors of the old East Indiamen, making their voyages out round the Cape, saw more of other vessels

and of the land than their descendants in the square-riggers of to-day, coming to England from Australia by way of Cape Horn.

But sooner or later we had to cross a steamship's route. We could not hope that it would be before we came to the Line—perhaps not even then, though the Buenos Aires and Rio steamers should cross somewhere near where we were bound. At any rate we could scarcely sail through the length of the North Atlantic without finding something.

The weather improved, after that final heavy blow, and warmth came back into an air that had not known it for some time. The sun came out, although we did not enjoy many days without rain. The wind settled into the east, light, and though we made no great progress we slipped steadily on—about ninety or one hundred miles a day or so. The ship was not making so much water, though the gas which came through the hold ventilators was strong and horribly nauseating. We took advantage of the rainy days to wash the white paint, a thoroughly rotten pastime which all true seafarers abominate but cannot avoid. The ship, as is the style with sailing ships and always has been, was painted a clean white relieved by blue here and there, making her clean decks an object of beauty on a moonlit night, with the tall masts and white sails rising from them. There is a loveliness about a sailing ship that even the tragedies aboard her cannot kill; we loved the old *Grace Harwar* as we walked her decks by night, keeping a watchful and worried eye on the door leading into the saloon beyond which the second mate slept—or tried to sleep—and now and again cast

an eye at the wind and the sails and the sea. We sailed without lights and without a lookout, save the helmsman and the officer of the watch. He spent the whole of his four or five hours' night turn on the narrow space of the standard compass bridge, between the lifeboats, so that he might better guard the poop; he could also keep a better lookout from there, ahead. The whole watch was posted round the after part of the main deck, keeping lookout, prepared for anything. There was nothing we could do to help the second mate, except watch him as he asked us to, and in the days talk to him and try to induce in him some other point of view. He was at times most despondent. At other times he tried to smile. He sat up and tried to play cards; he talked with the Captain and the chief mate, and the sailmaker and others of us. After a while he came out on deck, looking pretty haggard, and sat in the sun and helped the sailmaker with his sails. There was plenty of sewing to be done, getting ready some old sails to send aloft in place of the good ones that had seen us round the Horn; there was no use for good sails when the Trade Winds came. They could have a rest; any patched and decrepit sailcloth could hold in the Trade Winds and flap itself to pieces in the doldrum calms. There were not many old sails to send aloft, and some of those which were available were in a serious state of disrepair. There was never any scarcity of work for the sailmaker.

We never referred to the second mate's breakdown. We went about the decks by day before him as if everything was quite normal; he frequently expressed the hope that we would come to port soon in order that he might

have medical attention, and be free of the ship once and for all. He knew there could be no proper recovery while he was compelled to be on those decks, and to remember with ghastly vividness all they stood for.

The days dragged slowly by—eighty-three days, eighty-four days, eighty-five days, ninety-five days, ninety-six days. The voyage seemed interminable. We were all anxious that it should be over; we all knew that there was little chance of that for weeks to come—perhaps months. The slow progress, the now changeless face of the eternal sea—smiling always, radiant with sunshine always, and leaping and effervescing for sheer joy; yet never deceiving us—the changeless form of the ship always with us, the worry of the second mate, the leak, the gas, the growing seriousness of the food position, the disturbing memories of the death of Walker—these things combined to fill us with a morbid concern for ourselves that was neither good for us nor for the voyage. From my upper bunk in the little cabin I could look through a port out on the sea; many, many times I lay there and looked out, always at the sea, now blue, now grey, now clear, now hazy, now full of life and now dull and lifeless. I grew almost to curse the sea; it seemed sometimes that there never would again be anything to look at in this world save that never-ending water. When the ship was becalmed it was particularly trying; then we made no progress, but lay still, sweltering, while the oily water gurgled lazily round the cutwater and astern.

We were lucky with the wind, thank heavens. We got the south-east trade on the eighty-third day out, somewhere in about latitude 24 South, longitude 26 West. For

that time of the year—July—that was good. We had a reasonable expectation, since the sun was so far north of the Line, that the south-east Trades would see us over the equator and once across the line the voyage was nearly done. The Trade Winds fluctuate with the seasons, both north and south of the Line, as any schoolgirl could tell you. They are not steady winds blowing according to a constant programme; they vary in strength and range, as well as direction, even from degree to degree. When the sun is far north of the Line, the south-east Trade goes across to seek it; when the sun is far south of the Line, the south-east Trade retreats to perhaps 7 South or even further, and the north-east dips, in its turn, into the territory usually labelled on maps of the world in atlases as "doldrums." The doldrums are not constant; sometimes a ship may dodge them altogether, or almost so, by the greatest good luck.

Our Trade Wind played us tricks, and sent us a good deal of rain. It was more east than south-east; sometimes it came from east-north-east. Generally it was fairly strong, and the ship sailed along a steady eight knots. She could have done ten if she had been clean. We caught the rainwater, when it had quite washed the salt out of the poop-deck and the deck-head of the foc'sle, and stored it zealously in deck tanks. Then when it was Sunday all hands enjoyed themselves getting through the stored-up washing of the voyage; in the rain, while it lasted, we had a glorious bath. Beckman tied a piece of soap on his head and went round naked, leaving the rain to wash him; Finila had no soap but soon borrowed some. Everybody had stacks of washing; there had been no

chance to do any earlier in the voyage. Fresh water is a valuable commodity in a sailing ship, and even if there had been plenty of it, it would be quite futile to wash clothes when you could not dry them. The sea kept them wholesome, anyway; we had beards and generally must have looked an unkempt and unlovely crowd. In the Trade Winds the beards came off and neat bunk curtains were bent, the cockroaches cleared out of the foc'sle as well as possible—it was hopeless to think of exterminating them altogether—and things generally were cleaned up and made shipshape. After the paintwork was washed round, we scraped off the rust and gave the naked steel beneath three coats of red lead, so that by the time we came to the Line we were ready to begin the serious business of painting round.

Throughout these weeks the second mate was up and down, up and down. He worked hard on deck, and while he was at work he was all right. It was the nights which beat him. The captain was very worried about it all, naturally; he slept in the sail locker, in the forepart of the poop, that he might keep a better watch by night if anything happened. The second mate was much troubled by sleeplessness; nothing seemed to help him much. There was a little morphia in the ship, in the medicine chest. One day he found it and took the lot. He went to sleep then, and we did not know whether he would wake again.

He awoke, after two days, and seemed surprised. . . . But the sleep refreshed him, when the effects of the drug wore off, and after that he was better. He asked the Captain if he could go back in his watch again, suggesting

that if he had plenty to do he would not be able to think so much. The Captain granted his request and he came back into our watch, but soon he found the night watches terrifying; they were worse in the gentle Trade Winds than they had been in the roaring gales down south. There was nothing to do. There was no wind change to fear, and the sails did not require trimming. He had nothing to do but walk up and down and think. He could not stand it; he appealed to the Captain to allow the carpenter to come into the watch with him to keep him company by night on the lonely poop. The Captain granted the request readily, sorry that he had not thought of it himself, and the carpenter and second mate stood the watch together, the mate carrying on alone in his as he had throughout the voyage—and for nearly four years before that.

But the second mate found it too much. He could not go on. He broke down again to everybody's perturbation. It was evident that nothing could be done for him while he was in that ship; if we were to drag on much longer on our interminable, worrying voyage, nothing could save his reason.

Then afterwards the mate also felt the strain. He looked very white and drawn, though he did not say anything. It was a severe strain. Not only did he go on endlessly with the keeping of his own watches; he took a leading part in the navigation of the ship, which ordinarily was the second mate's department, and he gave up almost the whole of his day watches below to talking to the second mate, and helping him somehow to forget the things that worried him. That was not an easy task;

the mate must have been averaging then—this went on for months—perhaps five hours' sleep in twenty-four. It was certainly no more. He had no recreation. Sunday brought him no rest, nor any day. He ran the ship as well as his watch; he was the executive officer, responsible to the Captain for the deck, and he had to look after it.

It was small wonder that later on he, too, found that he could not go on, though it was actual physical weakness in his case and he had no nervous breakdown. The spirit was willing always to drive the flesh on through anything, but there was a limit to what the flesh could stand. He missed only a watch or two, and then was well again though still white. Perhaps the unsuitability of the sea diet had something to do with his illness; even if one gets enough of it to eat, the diet which is followed in deep sea sailing ships, with their four and five months at sea and their callings at outlandish ports where they are little better off than upon the broad waters, must have a serious effect upon men's stomachs. It is not a diet designed by medical men nor dictated by rules of health; rather is it compounded from considerations of cheapness and ease of cooking. On most voyages plenty of fish are caught, wholesome deepwater bonito and albacore which are a veritable joy to the mariner, dry and coarse though they may appear to more discerning palates.

But in the *Grace Harwar* we were cursed. We never caught a fish throughout the voyage. None ever came near to give us a chance to try; we had a harpoon and line, especially prepared to catch the succulent porpoise, but the beasts seemed to know about it, and upon the rare occasions when they played round the bows, they dashed

about deep below the surface with the speed of torpedoes. We never got a decent shot at one of them; we rarely tried. We saw albacore, but they did not come close enough to try for them. We saw bonito, but the curse still held. Ordinarily the sailing ship drives a little shoal of flying fish before her, frightened out of the water by the noisy approach of her bows, and the bonito and the albacore learn about it and follow her, preying on the little fish that leap from her onrush. Then one may lie out on the bowsprit end with strong line and sturdy hook adorned only by a piece of white bunting as bait. You dance the bunting along the surface of the seas and the bonito leap for it, imagining it to be a flying fish because they have not learnt of man's deceptions, and all that leaps from the sea and is white is food to them; then they are easily caught, if the hook holds, and transferred into the cook's pots.

But we did not catch one. Flying fish we saw in profusion, but not before our bows. They were all flying south, without one single exception. Why that should be I have no faintest idea. I simply state the fact. They all flew towards some direction southwards, against the direction of the wind. The Captain said that maybe it meant heavier weather further north, but we did not find any difference in the weather as we sailed along. He suggested also that they were flying south because the sun was bound there; I don't know. At any rate the bonito and the albacore followed them and we could not get a chance even to try to catch them. That would have been a matter of no concern aboard a steamer, whose people do not have time to notice the habits and the curi-

ous things there are to learn about the dwellers of the deep; but it became more serious to us as the days passed.

Ninety-four days out we crossed the Line, and the south-east Trade still blew us along. We really did quite well out of that. Considering the condition of the ship's bottom and the fact that we were fifty-seven days to Cape Horn, we were wonderfully fortunate to come to the Line in less than a hundred days. Crossing the Line made a difference to us; we were on the last stage of the voyage after that. Another month or so and it should be through. The days were very hot and all trace of winter was long since gone. In place of unpleasant cold we now suffered unpleasant heat; the boys took to swimming round the bows on days when the ship had little way. It was fine exercise and it kept us cool. A rope ladder was put down from the foc'sle head, trailing in the sea, and then one dived from the bowsprit end and swam to the ladder. It was perfectly safe and splendid fun. The pessimists talked of sharks, but a sharp lookout was kept and nothing seen. We saw an old blue whale which was a most friendly beast, persisting in following the ship for days, coming up lazily to blow now and then right under the counter or close alongside, much to the alarm of the ship's dog which became frantically excited, not being able in the least to understand what all the noise was about.

The whale several times rubbed its length on our sides, and we were pleased, hoping that it would knock some of the barnacles off. It swam off now and then, but always came back again. We were able to watch it for days, manœuvring beneath the water and on the surface, close alongside. It was quite alone; no other whale came to

join it. Perhaps it was hanging round us so long in a pathetic search for lost cows; there is a heavy thinning of whales these days of sudden death from harpoon guns and 20,000-ton factory ships that boil down thirteen to twenty a day, like so many carcases of dead cart horses.

We much regretted that we could not catch the whale and try some of its steak. It was a huge blue whale from the Antarctic; if we had dropped an anchor on it, it might not have noticed.

On the day that we crossed the Line there was a Neptune ceremony, not that anyone felt like it, but to lift us out of our thoughts for a while and give us something else to think about, something else to do, as well as definitely to impress upon us the fact that the last stage of the voyage had been reached and there was now not much more to come. The boys took their parts very well and the whole thing was quite well done. Sjöberg was Neptune, with a chain of insignia round his neck, some rope round his waist, huge whiskers and little else; Beckman was his wife, making up into a charming girl. "Her" skirt was a bunk curtain and her hair was combed rope-yarn; her lips were daubed with red-lead for lipstick and her eyebrows with tar. There were also a doctor, the Dean of the Equatorial Cathedral, the barber, the chief of police and his assistants; the nigger was a slave, and when the two victims were also counted we were left with practically no crew. Jim was the cleric, Hägert the barber, Bergqvist the doctor, and the sailmaker the chief of police. We went through the complete old wind ship service, of Neptune hailing the ship and coming aboard over the knightheads, proceeding in state with his court

and Mrs. Neptune along the deck, asking for all who had not previously entered his domain to be presented to him, and all the rest of it. There were two unfortunates who held no pass from King Neptune. These were the two Australians, who had not previously been out of their own country. They were arrested, smeared with a foul mixture of tar and grease and fish oil, shaved, ducked, and otherwise dealt with, and at the conclusion of it all forced to kiss Mrs. Neptune on the red-leaded lips.

It served its purpose. They took it all in great part for the sake of the certificates of clearance to be received afterwards and because also they were fully aware of the inner meaning of the celebration. Afterwards the Captain had all hands on the poop for another celebration; it chanced also to be his wife's birthday, and in honour of the dual occasion—and also not forgetting that inner purpose, of getting away from our thoughts a little—he had prepared a bucket of tea into which liquid of greater strength was mixed. The cook had baked some cakes with the material at his disposal—not much, but he made good use of it. We spliced the main brace so efficiently and so often with that compound of tea and other liquids that, if there was a strand left untouched after three hours or so of it, no one was in a fit condition to discover it—except Alf, of course, who refused all stimulants. He was right and we were wrong, I suppose, but we wanted to forget. The ship was safe enough; there was no other vessel, probably, within three hundred miles of us.

It was a great afternoon in every way. The second mate was there, though he did not drink anything. ("Why should I begin now, when I have never drunk any-

thing before?" he asked even on the first day when offered something to support his nerves.) He smiled when French Peter gave a song in French and broke down half-way through in wild disorder; he listened with interest when Blomqvist sang a wild Russian drinking song and Finila an even wilder medley in Finnish. . . . Nightfall found us all dancing round the bole of the mainmast, singing in Russian. Half of us couldn't dance, none of us could sing, and mighty few knew a word of Russian.

The Trade saw us on a little further beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the equator. Then it left us, very quietly as if it did not want us to know that it had gone; we were left for a day or two wallowing stagnantly, looking for wind that did not come. But the fates were determined to keep up their new-found kindness towards us, and we found the south-west monsoon. Officially, we had no right to expect it before the end of August at the earliest. The south-west monsoon is a wind that is caused by the cool air in the neighbourhood of the Line from about 25 West extending eastwards to the African coast, blowing in from the sea in a south-westerly direction towards the deserts of Africa, from which the heat of the summer has caused the parched air to rise, giving the cooler breeze from the sea the chance to make its onslaught. We guessed that it must have been a particularly hot summer over Africa to bring the monsoon into action so early; it was hard luck for Africa but we were glad. It was then but the end of July, and unofficially the glorious old monsoon was blowing merrily away.

It saw us to about 12 North. We had no doldrums, only two days of stagnant calm during which nothing hap-

pened. The doldrums is not a belt of calm in the accepted sense. Calm is not so bad by itself. At least you don't have to haul the yards round when it is only calm. The doldrums consist rather of an area of upset, mad, irrelevant, and baffling winds, some light, some strong, most of them accompanied by heavy rain-squalls, all bearing one common point of semblance in their inconstancy. There is calm too, of course, but not for long. For the most part, working a ship through the doldrums is quite the worst part of her voyage; you must make the most of every wind that comes and trim the yards to every cat's-paw. You are glad when it is calm, for there is then no wind to necessitate a haul on the braces—so long as it is not calm for too long, of course, for there is nothing ghastlier than stagnation long continued.

We were lucky to get that monsoon. It was the Captain's knowledge of the wind that got us our luck. In a sailing ship you learn about the wind and its allies the currents; setting out from anywhere on earth, the sailing ship master must know where he will meet the best winds to take him to the next place to which his ship is bound. It is not always easy to make decisions. At the very setting out from Australia, for example, he has a choice of routes—Good Hope or the Horn. His choice depends upon himself and the season. It was winter when we left, and there was only Cape Horn in it; but that is not the only occasion when the master must gamble on his judgment. Almost every day he must, even when he has fair wind or is in the Trades. Where shall he cross the Line? That is a ticklish problem, depending for its answer on the time of the year, the trend of the weather, the experi-

ences of former crossings. Too far eastwards towards Africa, there is a belt of calms; too far westwards towards America, the ship, picking up the north-east Trades, may have to tack in them if they have too much of northing in them at their beginning. It may be safe to cross at one place one week, and not the next. Usually sailing ships cross somewhere between 27 West and 30; we took a big chance on it, and crossed in 25. That brought us our monsoon, the influence of which probably did not extend another degree westward; it brought us also to the tail of the north-east Trades, and took us quickly over a section of the voyage where ordinarily we might have suffered most delay.

The good wind and the quick passage of the equatorial belt bucked the second mate up; fair wind was his best tonic.

Captain Svensson told me one day at the wheel that reference to the old log-books in the ship and the charts—dating back, of course, only to that washing out off the Horn—showed that the *Grace Harwar* had never been delayed more than four days in the doldrums on any of her voyages. Ships, he said, were curious things. They seemed to have set habits, little idiosyncrasies of their own. His study of the *Grace Harwar* showed him that she was a fine ship to get away from a port, but a bad one to entice into the next one. She set out splendidly, glad to be clear of the land; but she was the very devil to bring to her journey's end. She had always been the same, he said. She usually had bad luck in the north-east Trades. He felt convinced that she would have that bad luck again, despite her good passage of the South Atlantic.

Whether that was to be the case or not, we found the north-east Trades easily; the sou'west monsoon just hauled gently round into the nor'nor'east, making us put the ship about on a sweltering day. Work! Madre de Dios! The perspiration dripped into the scuppers. We sweated every brace and trimmed every sail to make the most of the light breeze, which gently and imperceptibly freshened with the passing of the days. We were 102 days out when it first came, somewhere in about 12 North; that day we saw the first steamer of the voyage. She was afar off, a blur on the horizon, and she came no closer.

In port we would have scorned to look at any steamer, but we thanked God for this one. We had been a world unto ourselves for so long—a worried and sometimes distraught world, with many anxieties, and in such conditions one's mind becomes easily the prey of all kinds of wild imaginings. The steamer, blur-like cloud on the horizon as it was, showed us that other people were in the world and brought us encouragement to carry on.

The food position was then becoming a little serious. All the sugar was finished at the Line; now the margarine (never of excellent quality) was also gone. One day we made the discovery that the salt meat was all bad, and five tins of bully-beef were all the meat that remained. Still we were not alarmed about these things. These were better days of sunshine and hope; we worked quietly about the decks in sunshine and under smiling skies, and the home wind singing in the sails bore us steadily on.

CHAPTER XIV

JIM'S YARN

ON one of these better days, Jim told me a yarn about the queerest voyage he'd ever made. Jim was a fine, straight chap, with an excellent sense of humour that even that voyage could not kill, and a shrewd outlook on a life which did not have many murky sides left to expose to him, but quite a number of good ones. Jim didn't talk much about himself and it wasn't until we had been shipmates for a long while that I heard about the voyage. He helped once to bring a tiny ferry-boat from the building yards on the Clyde to Sydney harbour, New South Wales. When they steamed down the Clyde an old chap on the quayside shouted in parting blessing the cheering hope that they "*might* get there"; when at last, after a five-month passage, the little ferry came rusty and provisionless through Sydney Heads the cheerful pilot who came aboard wanted to know if they'd been "out all night in the blessed thing."

"Out all night?" echoed the tired and exasperated crew. "We've been five flamin', all-fired, sulphurous, unprintable months!"

And then they proceeded to give details, many and at great length, but all qualified with the same adjectives. Jim's yarn about it all in Jim's own words ought to make pretty interesting reading.

"If ever anybody ever offers me a run to Australia in

a ferry-boat again, or in any other sort of a ship but a 20,000-ton real ocean-going liner or maybe a decent sort of a sailing ship," said Jim, "then I reckon I won't be responsible for picking up his pieces afterwards. I was stranded in London when I took on the ferry-boat voyage, but rotten as a penniless London is—and that's some!—I'd sooner be a permanent and hopeless stiff there than drag on ferrying across the world again to get out of it. Seeing what I'm going to say about this ferry-boat and some of the chaps who were in her, perhaps it'll be just as well if we leave her without a name. . . . The only lad who'll ever remember her name with any sense of satisfaction, out of the eighteen of us who shipped in her at the Broomielaw shipping office, is an old Scotch shellback who drew a month's advance in Glasgow and got sent back sick from Port Said before he worked it out.

"Our ferry-boat was about three hundred tons, top-heavy, unballasted, with a propeller and rudder at each end and no slightest qualification for undertaking a twelve-thousand-mile ocean voyage. If there hadn't been mugs like us in the world she couldn't have gone, but there's a pretty good supply of them, somehow. We came out through Suez, of course, since that was supposed to be the shortest and most sheltered way, and called at Algiers, Port Said, Suez, Perim, Aden, Colombo and Sourabaya. We were held up two months in Aden while the monsoons were supposed to blow themselves out, and bad as the sea was I reckon that long spell in Aden was the worst part of the whole experience. But everything in its turn; everything in its turn.

"We didn't think, when we first saw what that ferry-

boat could do in a seaway and still float, that we would ever even see Algiers, much less Sydney. Roll! I've never seen anything like it. She didn't roll; she *fell* over, first this way, with a sickening motion as if she were in her death struggles, and then that, with a terrifying, unnerving hover over in between. When she first played this trick we thought she was going right over, and every time afterwards somehow something of this fear stuck to us; and you can take it from me that when a man thinks his last hour has come all his past life *does not* rush in a kind of old-fashioned panoramic show before him. He just swears to himself for being such an unglorified fool as to be there, and gives himself up to good, honest old fear that causes a literal pain in the chest . . . We had head winds as soon as we poked our nose out of the Clyde, and they stuck with us until we came through the Straits of Gibraltar.

"Heavy weather in the Bay of Biscay didn't make things any the more pleasant, nor did the incompetence of the cook. His name was Cook and he had signed on as cook, but apart from those two indisputable facts his culinary accomplishments consisted of nothing at all. He could make two dishes: one was stew and the other wasn't. We couldn't eat either of them. He wasn't so bad with the tin-opener though, and to do the poor devil justice he had just about the worst job of the lot of us in that little hell. Whoever had been responsible for supplying a 'galley' for the unfortunates who were to take the vessel out had just removed some of the seating accommodation in an apartment that was to be a lavatory when the ship was in Sydney harbour, and had jammed in an inefficient

stove. There wasn't any place for the smoke to escape and there was no place to keep anything.

"That was just the general style of things in that ship, though. She had bunkers enough for forty-eight hours' coal, so enough for two weeks was piled about the decks, putting her in an even worse trim than she naturally would have been for an ocean voyage. She had all round her a huge wooden fender, fixed on with a steel band which was bolted through to the ship's side, but she rose so much and so high on the crests of seas, and flopped this fender arrangement down on to the water again so often and so viciously, that after a few days of it half of it was washed off, steel bolts and all. The boltholes were left in the ship's side and she began to leak. We tried the pumps but they wouldn't work; the rose box in the fore peak, which was now nearly full of water, was choked with old engineers' overalls, rivets, broken hammers, and such like, and we didn't have any divers' gear aboard to go down and clear it.

"So she just went on leaking, and one light collision bulkhead was all that stood between us and a pretty uncomfortable grave. The crew had been 'housed'—if one could use such an expression—in a sort of a dogbox just abaft this collision bulkhead, all in together, firemen and all, but very soon we decamped out of that and took refuge in the seats of the upper deck. Here we remained for the rest of the voyage, leading a catch-as-catch-can kind of an existence, sleeping on the seats that despite their heavy lashings sometimes used to carry away with her wild rolling and career down to the lee side, pitching us out and all. It was a grand voyage! The dogbox that

should have been our foc'sle was washed out, unventilated, and somewhat too dangerously close to that protecting bulkhead.

"And what sort of lads would drag on a voyage in a waggon like that? We were eighteen all told, two sailors in a watch, four on and four off, with three firemen taking a watch each of four hours and two ordinary seamen trimming coal on deck. Then there were the skipper and his two mates, three engineers, a donkeyman, a cook and a messboy. The messboy was an Australian who had been stranded out of a Danish motor ship somewhere on the Continent and had drifted to England; he had joined the Dane in Gladstone or somewhere, in the north of Queensland, as ninth greaser or something. He looked as if he hadn't had a wash since. He said he was twenty-four, but he only looked nineteen; he must have been twenty-four, though, as nobody could have got as dirty as he was in only nineteen years. They stood him in the cabin as far as Port Said, but there the mate took him gently by the hand and led him to the coal bunkers where he shoved a great scoop in his hand and told him to go to it.

"Of the three firemen only one had been a ship's fireman before. The second had been a soldier in India and was a trier; the third was the sort of chap they put fenders on motorcars for. He used to come up from the stokehold and turn in just as he was, though I will say that he never went more than a week without a wash. The engineers I didn't have much to do with and was just as well pleased; one of them made the voyage with a lifebelt always within easy reach and wasn't much in the engine room. I don't blame him. I think I remember he

was in the engine room in Glasgow and once in Algiers. The mate was a real hard case and the second was an old sailing ship man. The donkeyman took a watch in the engine room, and we had his own word for it that he could neither stop nor start the engines.

"The sailors? Not such a bad lot, seeing there were only four of us to Port Said, and three after that—mostly stranded Australians who had drifted somehow to England, without paying their fares, and were glad to clutch at any straw to get out of it again. One reckoned he had been in just about every workhouse in England and may have been, too, seeing that he hadn't done anything else there. An exasperated Australia House had been glad to see him pack his bag for our ferry-boat. It's curious the number of Australians who manage to get themselves stranded in England.

"In Algiers we fixed up the boltholes, took aboard coal enough to last us to Port Said, and got gloriously drunk. What else was there to do? How else could we go back in such a waggon? In the end we were, I believe, delivered to the ship at sailing time by a large force of police; a gang of Moors were hired to raise the anchor, the third engineer was in the stokehold and the second mate at the wheel, and the Sydney Harbour deep-sea going ferry-boat set out for the sea once more. Hours afterwards, awakening with a throbbing head to hear the sound of eight bells, I crawled to the wheel and relieved the second mate. He looked at me sorrowfully, yet with no words of reproach, and I made my apologies as well as I could and explained that I hadn't previously been aware that we had put to sea. Algiers was then well out of sight.

"On the way to Port Said the weather was a bit better, but daily the little vessel still went through her box of tricks and did her best to fall right over. In Port Said we found that another ferry that had gone before us had been held up by the authorities and ordered not to proceed past Aden until the official ending of the monsoon season, which wasn't for about three months after that. We naturally expected we would be held up too, but somehow nothing seemed to be done about it. We meant to take a hand ourselves but became too drunk to remember. The first night all hands went ashore sober. The messboy was the first back, accompanied by three Egyptian police who dumped him on our deck and made the skipper sign for him 'dead or alive.' Through the night the rest of us trickled back in various stages of inebriety; at 4 o'clock in the morning the second engineer arrived in state, rowed out by a large crew of Gyppos who filled the air with their lamentations when he refused to pay them their fare. They wouldn't put him aboard until he paid them twice as much as they'd any right to charge, and he called to heaven to witness that he'd already given them four times as much as the whole lot of them would ever earn in all their lifetimes. He had a gentle voice like a train accident and a vocabulary as refined as a bullock driver's and twice as extensive. In the end an Egyptian police launch came along to see what was the cause of the row keeping half Port Said awake—the other half was still up—and the engineer came aboard without paying.

"After a nice quiet week of this sort of thing in Port Said we sailed, ostensibly for Aden. Now I don't know

THE BOWS FROM ALOFT

LOOSING THE MIZZEN LOWER TOPS'L

whether it was because she was built in Scotland or what was the reason, but there was no steam on that ferry-boat's windlass and we had to get her darned anchors up by hand. Every blessed pilot who ever came aboard seemed to take a fierce delight in dropping the two of them upon every possible occasion, and we cursed those anchors at Algiers, Port Said, Suez, Perim, Aden, Colombo, and Sourabaya even more than we cursed the fate that put us in that ship. We had a French pilot for going through the Canal and we had to tie up about ten times every mile to let homeward bounders pass, and then we had to anchor for the night in the first of the lakes. That meant more insufferable graft on that infernal windlass . . . Then we hit the side of the Canal and buckled the propeller, whereupon the Old Man showed that his vocabulary in the sulphurous line was even better than ours. However, she would still go and in the course of time we cleared that infernal canal. Why De Lesseps didn't make it a bit wider while he was on the job I don't know; that certainly would have saved us a lot of trouble.

"We didn't wait at Suez, but stood down into the Red Sea, buckled propeller and all; but we hadn't got very far before a steam pipe burst and we had to put back whether we wanted to or not. There followed more nights of Egyptian joy in that wicked town of the Near East. The first night in Suez the Old Man wouldn't give us any money; said we wanted to buy beer with it, and we'd already had enough of that to last the rest of the voyage. The idea of wanting to buy beer! That was not what we wanted at all. What we wanted was beer for nothing. That was not to be had in Suez, however, just as it isn't

to be had anywhere else that I know of, so we had to put our heads together to see what we could do. Around Suez and all places East there is always a merchant hovering in a boat prepared to make a bid for any blessed thing from the crew's old false teeth to the ship's engines, if they are worth buying. He is willing, if argued with long enough—and days don't count in that business—to give a fifth of its value for anything . . . We wondered what we could do to raise the wind, and found means.

"In the night a giant Bedouin landed aboard with a car on the quay and a café uptown. He said that if we would patronise his café he would come for us in the car every evening and run us up. Good-oh, we said, and went up in his car. The café was the usual kind, big enough and gay enough from the outside, with a band, dirty tables, half-caste girls making eyes at anyone who cared to look in their direction, and all the rest of the squalid details. The big Bedouin came for us every night after that and ran us up in his car to spend what we had in the café; we thought it was too good to be true until sailing day came and he presented us with a bill for £4. 10. 0. for the use of the car. He never got the £4. 10. We told him to go to—well, a place even hotter than Egypt, and if it is fit for the reception of such as he it must be even nastier. He said he would get the police. We told him to go to it. He didn't; instead he came and whined to the skipper; the skipper told him to go to hell, and when he kept on whining, gave him a help in that direction with an almighty big foot. It wasn't until the last line was aboard that he gave up hope altogether, and he screamed abuse at us while his voice would reach. He may be still going

on, for all I know; I rather hope he is. That is the sort of trick they try to put over innocent sailormen in these dreadful Eastern places . . .

"What with one thing and another we weren't sorry to see the last of Suez, and after a delay of ten days there we slipped off down the Red Sea again with a new propeller. I forgot to say that we used one of the days to go and complain to the Consul about the ship. We hadn't anything else to do just then, so we said the food was no good and the cook couldn't cook it; there wasn't any food in the lifeboats and they wouldn't float, anyway; and the articles hadn't been posted up nor did we get our proper whack of lime juice. Apparently in English ships there is some maritime act or something which allows old foc'sle Jack to have a pretty good growl now and then, and he can kick up a good fuss if he feels like it and can get anybody to listen to him. We got the Consul to listen and worried our poor Old Man a bit more; the upshot of it all was we put some biscuits in the lifeboats, deposed the cook in favour of a Maltese steward, and saw the articles posted up on the bridge. Then we headed off, in great satisfaction, down the Red Sea.

"Our satisfaction was somewhat lessened by the tidings conveyed to us, when we were about five days out of Suez, that the Old Man wasn't going into Aden, but was going to call at Perim instead. He knew that a call at Aden would mean a hold-up until the end of the monsoon season, and he didn't want that. We knew that a call at Perim would mean standing on past Guardafui against all the gale-strength of the monsoon at the worst time of the year, in our little topsy-turvy tub of a ferry-boat.

We weren't standing for that, if we could help it, and we straightway began to plot darkly. Then we came to Perim and the little ferry sneaked in, the Old Man all smiles and offering us five bob each to go and get drunk so's he could sneak us all off again to the Lord knows where. But we weren't exactly looking forward to a watery grave so early in life, and took a hand in things ourselves. We drew up a letter to the shipping master at Perim or the governor or somebody, and said that we weren't satisfied with the ship's seaworthiness and wouldn't take her past Aden until an official investigation had been made.

"Again that splendid old act came in to support us and we carried off the day. The Old Man told us in no gentle tones—he didn't seem pleased, somehow—that if we got the darned waggon held up in Aden or any place else he'd sack the lot of us and we could do what we liked. Very well, we said—that good old act again—if you do you'll have to pay our fares either to Glasgow or to Sydney, and give us our wages until we reach 'em, too.

"The Old Man thought a bit at that—it was true enough—and when we were given a clearance at Perim only as far as Aden he took the ferry-boat to sea with a scowling countenance. It was all up then with his little scheme of seeing if we could get across to Colombo; in Aden there was an official investigation which took about five minutes before the unanimous verdict was reached that there we had to stay until the monsoon season was officially ended. The Old Man figured out it was better to keep the devils he had rather than send them back and bring out devils he knew not, so we stayed with our ferry

and set about enjoying the sights of Aden. The most enjoyable was the Scottish Borderers' canteen, but as that closed at 10 every night it left a lot of time on our hands. We proceeded to spend it in the manner acquired at Algiers, Port Said and Suez. We arrived in state at the leading hotel, where we were received with a kind welcome, until after about six rounds of drinks one of the firemen mentioned that we hadn't any money to pay for them. Somehow we were unpopular after that; we meant to pay for them, though, and the next night when we did have some money we arrived there again. After a round of drinks the fireman who had been the spokesman before happened, by purest accident, to trip over a waiter carrying a tray of drinks. We were all promptly pitched out then and that manager was never paid.

"I guess Nature made Aden a hell of a place but we didn't appreciate how preferable hell'd really be until we'd been there a month. We were sorry we had written that entreating epistle to the governor-general of Perim, and felt inclined to follow it up with a note to the Admiral of Aden—or whoever runs that place—asking to be allowed to go to sea. We never did, though. If we had, perhaps the natives would have been only too pleased to let us go, careless of our fate. We'd been having a pretty lively time, one way and another, and Aden was about fed up with it—affairs of fisticuffs with the native police, drunken sing-songs in the main street, and so on. But what do they expect you to do in a hole like Aden, anyway? Not to behave yourself, surely; we didn't try. The mate tried to get us to work from 6 A.M. until 6 P.M., but we went up in a deputation in force to the Old Man and said the

mate must reckon we were niggers just because we happened to be in a black man's country, and we weren't going to stand for it. After that we were required to be on board—I won't say we worked—from 8 A.M. until 3 P.M.; there wasn't anything much to do, except to take a bit of stores aboard now and then, and to keep the ship clean. I was night watchman for a bit, until I got sick of the chaps disturbing my sleep coming aboard drunk of nights.

"Regularly big passenger steamers bound to England, India, or Australia would call in at Aden. I remember a beautiful big P. and O. steamer coming in one night and having a ball on board. It must have been one of the firemen's birthdays. Anyway we were all broke at the time, fed up with Aden, and had nothing to do. So we invited ourselves to the P. and O. ball. I had gone over earlier and made arrangements with one of the sailors to lay a line over the side of the for'ard well deck on the side where the gangway wasn't, and after dark we crept across in our lifeboat and came stealthily aboard. We had a glorious time, though somehow I couldn't help thinking the firemen didn't look much like first-class passengers, but when we were pulling back to our ferry in the morning the darn boat got ashore and we were stranded on the mud until next afternoon. And hot! It gives me sunburn to think of it, even now . . .

"The next day a deputation of leading residents of Aden—they said they were leading residents—came aboard and asked our Old Man either to keep us aboard or to stop giving us money. He asked them, good old chap, who the blank they thought we were, his blanky

crew or his infinitely more blanky prisoners? And who was running the thousand-times-more-blanky ship, anyway. And so on, at great length . . . The deputation departed with the sad knowledge that the Old Man was worse than his crew and the resolution to write to Downing Street about it or have a question asked on the floor of the House; that day we'd made out our money list as usual, and, as usual, had asked for twice as much as we expected to get. The Old Man gave us the lot of it, an' we didn't know whether it was daylight or dark for three days afterwards. I'm not praising that sort of conduct or finding excuses for it, even; I'm only telling the truth about that voyage. And I can say that if I had to drag it on again I'd get drunker still.

"Somehow those days dragged by in Aden and at last came the day of days, September 15, official ending of the monsoon season, after which the authorities could hold us no longer—not that they wanted to. That day we raised our two anchors, at the cost of terrible toil, and picked our way through the shipping in the harbour. The big P. and O. steamer whose ball we'd invited ourselves to was there again, and she dipped her ensign to us as we passed and gave us three blasts on her siren. We answered with a proud dip of our old flag and some silly little wheezy screams on the steam whistle, and felt mighty small as we stood out into the open water. We felt smaller still when we found the monsoons, through some oversight, had taken not the least notice of the official ending of their season and were still unofficially blowing away as merrily as ever. The cork-like arrangement of a ferry-

boat tried to stand on her head now, as well as fall over, and we had a picnic of it until we got to Colombo.

"We had shipped two Arabs at Aden as extra firemen without pay—they wanted to get to Colombo—to help us across as far as Ceylon, but they mostly lay on the floor of the stokehold so seasick they didn't care whether she sank or not. At last we got to Colombo with everybody fed up and broke. Nobody went ashore except the two Arab firemen. They hadn't any money so all hands whipped in and gave them five bob each; we asked the skipper to write it up in our accounts against us and hand it over to the sons of Araby. At first he wouldn't do it; he suspected a plot to buy beer or something, and said it was a dodge to get money out of him. He reckoned the Arabs were to give it back to us as soon as it was handed over; after an argument he gave it to them, though, and that incident ended. We were two days in Colombo and nothing much happened, except that the infernal pilot dropped both anchors and put out five great mooring wires to buoys astern, all of which we had to get in by hand in the broiling Indian heat. We got our own back, though, because he came aboard dressed to go to a dance, about seven o'clock in the evening of the day we sailed, and it wasn't until near midnight that we had all those blessed lines and anchors in and at last were off. He had had a thing or two to say in the interval, and didn't seem to remember that it was he who made us put them all out.

"The next stop after Colombo was Sourabaya, and we had ten awful days of plunging and rolling about before we got to the Straits of Sunda. After that we slipped

along better and had a look at the wonderful Javanese scenery. Along the coast of Java we were treated to magnificent sights, and all of us liked Sourabaya a darn sight better than Aden. Nobody even got drunk there. Everybody seemed to be happily lazy and enjoying life while doing nothing—real Paradise, I call that. Some day I'm going back to Java; the one thing that I am prepared to give a lot of energy to is doing nothing. And I'm going back to Sourabaya to try.

"After Java our next stop was Sydney, our destination—a seventeen-day run, which was rather long for our little tub. We sneaked around the northern shores of Australia and down inside the Great Barrier Reef, managing to poke the ship's head on a piece of it that fortunately didn't do any damage. Two days out of Sourabaya all the meat went rotten and things were pretty short in the commissariat department. We didn't mind so much seeing that we were on the last lap, and dozens of flying fish came over our low sides and into the cook's frying pan. They weren't bad, either. Every day now something else of the ship's stores ran out—flour, beans, coffee, tea, milk, sugar and so on. But the Old Man had a good supply of grog and contracted the habit of splicing the main brace on all sorts of occasions, so that for the most part we were happy enough especially as the weather wasn't so bad going down the Queensland coast. We were all glad to see Sydney Heads, though, and when we steamed through the mighty entrance to Australia's beautiful harbour we forgot for the moment that if there'd been enough provisions in the ship to make a sea pie, there wasn't enough coal to bake it . . . What did it mat-

ter? Here was Sydney, and we had won! We handed the ship, pretty rusty and sea-worn now, over to some shore guys and took a hurried and happy farewell: nor did I ever look upon that ferry-boat again.

"I was nearly forgetting to say that we asked one of these shore guys who seemed to be some sort of a pannikin boss if we could get a job in our ferry, seeing that we had gone through so much to bring her out. 'Oh, no,' he said, as if we had insulted him, 'we've got our own men waiting now.' We'd risked our lives and gone through purgatory to bring out their blessed ferry-boat and now chaps who'd never been outside Sydney Heads in their lives were to step into her comfortable jobs. We were only mugs to risk our lives; they were in the Union. . . . The pannikin boss-fellow cheered us up no end though, when he told us that if we called at the ferry office next day we could have a photograph of the ship as a memento."

CHAPTER XV

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DISEASED PIG

WE thanked God for the passing of the days that brought us on. The north-east Trade, keeping to its tradition of unkindness to the old *Grace Harwar*, was much more from the north than from the east, with the natural consequence that the ship, lying close by the wind on the starboard tack, could not lay a better course than about north-north-west. It was better to let her go half a point free at that and give her some way, rather than to keep the weather leaches flapping and get her head perhaps half a point higher with a knot and more from her speed, not to speak of the added leeway. Out on the wide ocean the sailer does not point sharply by the wind very often; generally she goes full-and-by, even if it be three points or so from her course. Ships that are very good by the wind, such as the *Beatrice* and *Herzogin Cecilie*, do better, but they are few and the most drift where the wind wills.

Explained in non-technical language—if I can do it—the foregoing means that, when she crossed the Line and was delivered by the south-west monsoon, which blew from behind her, to the north-east Trades, the *Grace Harwar* had to sail through a belt of winds which were blowing from the direction in which she wished to head. The north-east Trade was a "head wind"—a contrary wind; and the ship had to sail the best course the wind allowed

her. She was sailing "by the wind"; the sails were trimmed as flat as they could be got, by hauling round the yards to as near to fore and aft as they would go and flattening aft all the sheets and heaving down all the tacks, thus transforming the planes of the square-rigger's sails into what was virtually the plane of a fore-and-after. Yachts sail "by the wind" by flattening in their sheets and thus hauling their main booms more amidships. A square-rigger is only a yacht grown up; instead of hauling her booms more amidships—not having any booms—she hauls her yards as near to fore and aft as she can get them. The lee braces are flattened out until the yards lie at as acute an angle to the keel as they can be made to do, with the shrouds and the maze of backstays which restrict their movement. The yards are then "braced sharp up," "hard on the backstays," and the ship is "close by the wind." When the wind frees—that is, works round sufficiently to allow the ship to lie up to her course—the yards are taken off the backstays and everybody feels much more cheerful, but since the north-east Trade is a more or less constant wind the only thing to do when it begins to blow is to get the yards on the backstays and leave them there, letting the ship make all the northing possible and hoping to get back the longitude she loses, since she must make leeway westwards when the wind is from the east, when the Trade Wind belt has been worked through and the westerlies of the North Atlantic are encountered. It would not pay to beat in the north-east Trades, thus hoping to regain lost longitude while still remaining in the Trade belt; it is better to stand on and get all the latitude possible, forgetting that there is a price to pay in lost lon-

gitude as well. Also favouring this policy is the fact that the further north the vessel sails, the less longitude will she have to regain when her chance comes; the less distance will she have to cover, to sail over the same number of degrees. The length of a degree of longitude varies considerably, and while a ship might drift westwards five degrees near the Line and lose about three hundred miles, by the time she has reached 40 North, the same five degrees can be regained by sailing a distance of not much more than 220 miles.

One fears that this description leaves a very involved subject more involved and complicated even than it was before, but at least it will help to show how extensive must be the sailing ship master's knowledge of the winds and the sea if he is to make the best use of the breezes his ship is given and get her from one port to another as quickly as possible. It is an art, none the less so because it is a dying one—almost dead . . .

We had not gone very far before we ran into patches of calm in the north-east Trade, much to our alarm. We did not want that! We were already almost four months out, and since it was drawing to the close of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, we had reason to fear a baffling passage through the horse latitudes, that lazy belt which separates the Trades from the westerly winds of higher latitudes. The Trade played us tricks before we reached 20 North, and we hoped it would see us through to 30. It died away; it blew down rain and thunder. For four days in about 22 N., we lay and sweltered. We had then drifted to beyond 30 West, and were still lying a bad

course. Some days we sailed about one hundred and fifty miles, sometimes twenty. There was always plenty of work to do; the incidents of the voyage threw us out of our regular routine, and in the North Atlantic we had to make up for it. The homeward-bounder is always cleaned and polished up in the north-east Trades, but there is so much to do that a good beginning is usually made long before the crossing of the Line. Indeed, the stock job of the voyage is cleaning ship, and that is one reason why the old-time shellback did not like homeward-bounders. He liked them well enough when it came to the singing of "Leave Her, Johnnie, Leave Her," after she was tied up in the last port, but he abominated the washing of white paint; he growled furiously about the number of days he was expected to devote to the dangling of a paint brush around; and he cursed profanely at the soul-searing job of caustic-washing the teakwood on the poop. Although the crew of the modern sailer has never the experience of ships that the old-timer had, at heart they are the same. They curse the caustic soda and the salt-stained teak; they hate the soda-washing, the soogee-moogee, the chipping hammers and the holystones. Holystones mostly are gone now, thank heavens; with such small crews there is work enough to do without them. The *Grace Harwar's* decks were tarred.

We painted the bulwarks white and pale blue three times round; we painted the foc'sle house, the galley, the lifeboats, the foc'sle head railing, the light towers, the figurehead of gilded scroll; we tarred the shrouds down, and painted the rigging screws and the rigging seizings; we cleaned up the forepeak and the sail-locker, and

painted the topmasts down; we sent the braces down, and overhauled and tarred them, taking the sheaves out of the brace blocks and greasing them; we washed and scraped and polished, and oiled and varnished and polished again the teakwood on the poop and flying bridge, until you could almost see the reflection of your face in the cabin skylight. There was always work!

The life of the ship slipped on peacefully in these days of sunshine. Take a look at this old full-rigger, relic of an age that is dead, wandering on quietly through the north-east Trades. You see a long, low, silver-grey ship, heavily rusted on her outside, heavily encrusted with barnacles along the waterline and showing a solid green mass of seagrowth when she lazily rolls. The sun is shining, and the three tall white-spread masts rise beautifully into the blue sky, the clean-cut sails swelling out in lovely curves in the breeze; the ship makes so gorgeous a picture that she looks almost as if she were *designed* to be beautiful and inspiring, and not for the dull business of carrying cargoes for a humdrum world. Now her forefoot rises a little from the swell, turning the blue sea a gentle white around the bow as she slips along; the stern settles a little closer to the heave of the sea and the water gurgles round the rudder and washes up close to the stern ports. She rolls a little this way and that, slowly, with no strain. She glides along with the sea and with the wind; she rides like a glorious great swan, at home on the sea, at peace with the world . . . At the wheel a boy, dressed only in a pair of old much-patched trousers, a sheath knife, and a wide sombrero bought in some store in Callao, lolls easily, watching the blue sea ahead and the flying fish rising in

their frightened schools before the bows; now and again he gives the wheel a spoke or two, but the steering is easy in weather like that. He leans more on the wheel than holds its spokes; the ship guides herself. She knows the road. The sun beams upon him pleasantly; the wind gently fans his sun-tanned face. His hands are tar-stained and his trousers covered with all the hues of paint there are. His copper-coloured back ripples with muscles even when he merely lifts an arm. Near by the sailmaker steadily sews at the stubborn canvas of some new sail, seated on his little sailmaker's stool with its sturdy legs and the broken sail needles prodded into one end of it. There are lots of these. He does not look up; he only sews. Stitch, stitch, stitch, and the seam of a sail is done; seam, seam, seam, and the whole of a sail is done. . . . It takes weeks to sew one sail. It is a big job, and a difficult one, but you would never guess that while you look at him. He has a wonderful knack, this sailmaker; he sews on with such a steady and unfailing speed and efficiency that he makes the thing look so absurdly easy you wonder the clipper ships of old did not take sail-mistresses to sea, since the needle has always been rather woman's domain than man's. But you are deceived by this sailmaker. It is not easy at all. He could show you, indeed, if he thought of it, that the first joint of his right forefinger, bound round now with a bit of rough rag smeared with tar and seized with sail twine, is worn almost to the bone by the constant wear of the needle. He tires sometimes of his endless sitting job and the ceaseless stitch, stitch, stitch to which he rises early every morning, from which he retires late every night. But you would

not think so, looking at him seated there by the mizzen mast.

The second mate is not much further on, on another stool, also stitching away. He is very pale and there are dark deep rings beneath his eyes. He does not look up; he stitches on. Neither of them say anything. Mike, the ship's dog—he came aboard in North Carolina—with his whole body stretched out along the deck, lies at a respectful distance, apparently asleep but not really so at all. He is keeping a sharp lookout, pondering meanwhile over such weighty topics as bones—damnably scarce here, he thinks—and the next newly painted spot he can discover to wipe the paint off on to his back. A great game, that; you don't know what he sees in it. He's always at it, though; he descends by the poop-ladder—weather ladder, too, since he is the Captain's dog—to the main deck, when nobody is looking, and rushes along to the place where the bulwarks have been most recently painted and rubs his back there, up and down, in huge delight. He tries to look as if he doesn't like it, but we all know him. He comes and lies beside the helmsman now and again, but never condescends to enter into conversation with him. But let the Captain or the chief mate appear on the scene! *Then* his tail wags until you would think it would drop off, and his tongue wags until you would like to pull it out, and he rushes about and jumps up on them, and on the newly varnished teakwood, and over the sailmaker's new sail, and doesn't care a hang for anyone . . . Now Captain and chief mate are below, and he is wondering if they have found any bones. It is quite a while since he had a real gnaw at a bone. They used to give him the salt

horse bones from the pea soup—rough truck, really, but then when you are an old sea dog you've got to put up with something. Even the salt horse bones have been off the menu lately; it really is getting too bad. He falls over on his side and permits himself, still with one eye half open, to fall asleep. What else is there to do?

Down on the main deck, three boys of the watch on deck sit in the starboard scuppers, painting the bulwarks their second coat. They talk to each other softly now and again; but for the most part they paint on. It is pleasant enough. Except that their ages differ a little, they have much in common with their shipmate at the wheel; they, too, are shirtless, lean, sinewy and tanned. If you asked them they might tell you that they are a little too lean to be comfortable. Perhaps they have not had a very big breakfast, and there is a possibility, too, that their dinner will be no heartier.

In the foc'sle you find the watch below. One or two sleep, being fed up with the length of the voyage and driven to despair by it; others sit at the table puzzling out navigation problems. One is at work on a little model ship in a bottle. In the galley the cook hangs over the lee door, surveying the atmosphere. His cat lies basking in the sun in the dry scuppers outside; the three fowls that still live are busy eating cockroaches that he has emptied out of a drawer for them. They teem in the galley, these cockroaches. Nobody minds. They are not inquisitive beasts; they do not bite you. Indeed, there is a belief, strongly supported amongst deep-water sailors, that a cockroach or two may be an acquisition to a ship since they kill out the bugs. You can have one or the

others, cockroaches or bugs. Cockroaches for them! Bugs bite, and in other ways are infinitely more loathsome and abominable animals. Cockroaches are so thick in the old *Grace Harwar* that you will find them even down the fore hold and in the sail-locker.

In his little shop beneath the foc'sle head, the carpenter is at work. On the raised step of his door one of the young Australians sits in admiration, making an effort at conversation now and again but really more intent upon borrowing some wood. He will have some before long. The nigger is at his washing in the shade further in.

It is a peaceful scene, and she was a peaceful ship. We could easily have forgotten Cape Horn and what had happened there, in the happier days of both Atlantics, if only we had been allowed. But you cannot forget things when one of you has died, when another has been nearly drowned in the sea, and a third has broken down.

There were other worries. The food position was becoming alarmingly serious. We encountered no steamers to ask for supplies to tide us into port. As the days passed, more and more of the few items of our small stock of provisions gave out. All the meat was used. There never had been any luxuries; we did not want them. We asked only for some wholesome food, our fill now and then, and always something to exercise our digestive organs at meal times. It was not always there. We were not starving, of course, and probably would never have been, with the wheat cargo. We still had some potatoes, taken fresh aboard in Wallaroo but now much the worse for keeping and the climatic changes of the long voyage. There was no way of keeping them fresh; they were kept

in their sacks down in the 'tweendecks of the forehold and left to enjoy what luck might come to them; most went bad. They were all tainted. We had also flour, and coffee which we drank with neither sugar nor milk. I remember being told by somebody, or reading somewhere, that if you only shut your eyes and didn't think about it you could pour mugs of milkless and sugarless tea, coffee, or cocoa down your throat and not realise that it was any different from the ordinary breakfast concoction, containing both milk and sugar. That is the purest bunk; you can't. You know damned well there isn't any sugar in it; milk doesn't matter so much. We never had any. Try the experiment with a mug of black unsugared Scandinavian coffee, and see for yourself. It tastes like tarred cabbage-water.

The 110th day came and went, the 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th. The sailmaker became rather seriously ill. We did not know what was wrong with him, but if starvation was fit treatment, then he would get well. The carpenter's face was sunken to a shadow; the others were much the same. It is good for you to fast, perhaps, but it is also very unpleasant when you have no other occupation but to think about it. It depresses you. It is very bad. There is nothing to lift you out of your thoughts; there is nothing to bring change into your life. You become primitive, morose, ill-tempered. Food! Food, food, food! You think of little else; you dream of succulent steaks and well-nourished sausages. On the lookout at nights, you plan and re-plan glorious feasts you are going to have when the ship gets to port. You will never be hungry again! You never have these feasts, of course,

and if you have gone through the same thing before, you know full well you will never have them while you allow your mind to go on dreaming about them. You conceive Paradise in terms of steak and eggs, and think of heaven as a blissful haven paved with fried onions. You think back over the glorious feasts of days that are gone; you wish that you had eaten more at them, and find it difficult to imagine any previous mode of existence when you allowed yourself to miss a meal or two and did not rush into every restaurant you came across and astonish the waitresses with furious demands for everything they had and a return of each . . . It is a bad business; the trouble is that hunger is a poor companion who never leaves you, once he decides to make your close acquaintance. And he gets much worse as the days go by.

We drifted across 35 West, almost to 40. There were days when we advanced ten miles . . .

All this time, the last of the pigs still lived. We looked upon it reverently and speculated daily on the number of feeds that could be carved from its small carcase. It *was* small. It was little bigger than a cat when it came aboard, and though it ate everything it could find, it did not grow as it should. Usually pigs fatten quickly on shipboard, once round the Horn; there is plenty of offal for them, and a knowing steward does not scruple to help himself to a sack or two of wheat from the ship's cargo. But this pig would not fatten. There had been talk of killing it about seven weeks previously, seeing that it did not fill out; we were glad now that the talk came to nothing. We did not mind when we learned that all the meat was gone, since we still had the pig. We figured out

that the pig would give us something to eat for nine days —perhaps more—eked out, of course, as only a sailing ship's cook knows how. There would be the blood from the slaughter, that could be mixed with flour and made into blood-cakes; we could eat some fresh—a bite or two each would suffice for a meal—and the rest could be salted.

We did not mind meatless days, so long as we still had the pig. We put off its slaughter time and again; the moral effect of the knowledge that it was still with us was of even greater value than one of its chops. We liked to think that we still had our pig; we wanted to stave off its slaughter until the final day. We did not know then how long we might be before we came to port; about that we could never be certain until the anchor was down. We might be a month, perhaps more. We had lost nearly fifteen degrees of longitude since the Line—about seven hundred and fifty miles. We had still the horse latitudes to negotiate. We had not passed the Azores. We could meet with many delays, and could count on nothing. The ship was little better than a floating barnacle.

The slaughter of the pig was arranged for the 118th day, but when the great day came the council of butchers decided that it was too hot. It was sweltering and quite calm. They did not like to take the risk of dispatching the pig in that weather. It might go bad; the salting arrangements were most primitive. The risk of any of the meat being lost was too much to run, and although there was much gnashing of teeth and tightening of belts there was general agreement that it was better to wait. The nigger did not agree. He said, loudly, that it was mere stupidity to go on hungry when there was still a pig in

the ship. French Peter told him that he didn't need to worry; there would still be a pig in the ship when the one in the sty was no more. There was nearly a fight at that. Although the boys were an easy-going lot, good-natured, friendly, and splendid fellows all, they were not superhuman. Nobody is, hungry. The nigger had attached himself to the port watch throughout the voyage, deserting the galley once the bad weather of the Cape Horn run was past, and doing little but hang round the foc'sle and talk. It was curious to notice the effect he had in that foc'sle. When it was first announced that he was to come aboard, back in Wallaroo, the Scandinavian boys did not like it. They prepared no welcome for him. They said that it was not right to have a black man thrust into their foc'sle. They were not pleased.

Then he came, straight from the gaol. He had a mouth organ with him and was not abashed. He spoke Swedish very well. He sang very badly. He cooked splendidly. He was established from the first night. He was a boy, scarcely eighteen; the Scandinavians had no previous experience of his kind. They looked on him as a kind of pet, a sort of monkey. He would have been a decent nigger if they had not treated him in that way. But he was spoilt; he always had that treatment in Finnish ships. He acted up to it; he made the port watch cakes with flour and margarine when the cook was not looking; sometimes he made us all some little thing extra. If he had been so disposed, he could have made the food question a much less pressing one; he was a wizard in the ship's galley. But the ship's cook was established there; professional jealousy forbade his helping. It was a curious position.

The nigger was a passenger, of course, since he came aboard merely in the course of his deportation from Australia and would not have been there at all if he had not happened to run away from another of the owner's ships, making the owner liable for a fine of £100 if he did not get him away again from Australia. He washed the dishes in the foc'sle after meals, and did little else. He instigated and stirred up a campaign against the unfortunate cook when the food was short and the boys were in fit state of mind to be swayed by this kind of propaganda. He had shown them that he could cook.

The upshot of it all was that one day Sjöberg, with the full accord of his brethren of the port watch (except Jim, who had been with dark gentlemen before), took back the mess of beans which the cook sent into the foc'sle for breakfast and aimed them, dish and all, into the galley together with such remarks as he thought appropriate to the occasion. There was a council of war in the foc'sle after that. The nigger had a great deal to say. It was decided to go aft in deputation to the Old Man and ask him to depose the cook and set up the nigger in his place.

It was a grossly unfair proposition. The unfortunate cook, perhaps not inspired in his profession but still better than many others who have borne the title, had been over two years in the ship, toiling in the galley day in, day out, with always the same food to cook and always the same methods of preparing it. After two years in the same ship, with never any great variety, a crew of saints would become sick to death of the best cook on earth. There were no saints in the *Grace Harwar*. But the cook did his best; there were some of us who would

not stand for the deputation, on many grounds, and that proposition fell through.

In the evening there was a deputation to the Captain to discuss the position. He came to the saloon door and discussed it openly; he said that we would try to get something from a steamer when the opportunity arose. If the salt meat had not gone bad we would not have been in such straits; it was bad luck. We were nearly four months at sea then, too, and that is a long time. He said that we would have a shilling a day extra while we were short of food.

The shilling a day was no consolation, but it was some relief to talk the thing over with the afterguard. There was no suggestion of ill-feeling or haggling over it. It couldn't be helped. We would have to go on.

And there still was the pig.

On the 120th day we killed the pig. It was a solemn occasion; all hands looked on in bloody joy, though, out of consideration for the seriousness of the ceremony, no one said anything.

We killed it because we felt we had come to the absolute end of the period when to gaze upon it brought us moral support; we wanted to see how it tasted.

Cleaning it after the slaughter we saw unmistakable evidence of disease. We tried to forget the evidence; we were not butchers but anybody could tell that all was not well with that pig. It had never grown, for one thing. We felt horrible qualms; what if we could not eat it, when we had waited so long and counted so much on it!

Perhaps worse things have happened. We felt incapable of imagining any.

The pig *was* diseased. Next day the flesh was just rotten, and we never had a feed off it at all. It was one of the worst tragedies of the voyage. We felt almost inclined to try a meal off it in spite of everything; we could not bring ourselves to throw it overboard. We put it all—there was not so much of it—in a harness cask and stowed it away beneath the foc'sle head.

The bloody joy of the crew, watching the slaughtering ceremony, turned to a bloodier sullen rage. Why should fate have dealt out this latest miserable blow? It was so unfair; the mind may not help the flesh very much when the flesh is in such misery from long lack of proper nutrition. There is a limit; you cannot forget the fact that you are hungry.

The position became worse as the days passed. We discovered also that we did not have much more coal—perhaps enough to keep the galley fire alight for the remainder of the days of the voyage, provided there were not too many of them. There was almost no lamp oil; there never had been much. There was perhaps a pint of kerosene in the ship. With this we mixed some foul concoction of animal oil, getting a result that would neither burn nor give a light. It reeked loathsomely and smoked and spluttered; it was almost impossible, without constant trimming, to see the compass in the binnacle at night. We could no longer read in the foc'sle during the easier of the night watches. By night we endeavoured to steer the ship without a compass, by day to eat meals without food.

We saw two steamers. They were both a long way off. We were pretty near the shipping tracks then, being well

up in the North Atlantic; we knew it was only a matter of time before a steamer came close enough to signal. We had no wireless, of course, and no means of signalling except by the flags of the international code. We could watch steamers pass by, on the horizon, and be quite unable to communicate with them. Unless one came close we were lost. The small flags of the international code cannot be read very far.

A steamer came close, passing us by about a mile and a half off. It did not notice the fact that we were flying distress signals; it did not seem to notice our presence in the sea at all. It steamed by, never once giving the faintest sign that it saw us. The boys were furious. Bergqvist said, jokingly—though he did not feel inclined to joke about it—that it looked like the steamer they had stopped in the *Favell* last voyage when they were over six months from Geelong to Falmouth, and suggested that it was a case of once bitten twice shy. It was a distressing experience to watch the steamer pass by. I remembered the *Lysglimt*. That was very much worse . . .

We saw other steamers later on, or rather their smoke upon the horizon. We had no chance to ask another to assist us. We saw one that changed its course *away* from us—God knows why—when it would have passed close if it had held to its original course. Chivalry at sea? One would have thought it worth any steamer's while to come close over to an old full-rigged ship, if only to let her people see something of real sea beauty; such notions, we bitterly felt, belonged to the days of courtesy towards women and truth in newspapers.

We were now becalmed. We were still two thousand

miles from Falmouth; the few items of food we still had—a few potatoes, some beans, and one or two other small things —were insufficient for another week. We had prospects of being another month at sea. The outlook was not bright, though we still carried on with our daily tasks and got the ship ready to come into port. There was more trouble with the second mate, who broke down again. We were pretty despondent about it all. And there was always the leak.

The steamers became thicker. We saw their lights on the horizon at night. We tried to Morse some of them, but we had so weak a light that they could not read what we said. It is doubtful if some of them were aware, even, of the fact that we were attempting to signal. One was a big passenger steamer, French, by the look of her. It was in the evening, hazy. She quite likely did not see us. She was a long way off; her smoke betrayed her to us, but our sails would blend with the haze and make us most difficult to pick out. The twilight is the worst light, both for lookouts and signallers.

We were 123 days out before we had assistance. On the night of that day—Sunday, August 18, 1929—we picked up the lights of a steamer coming from ahead. We signalled her with the Morse as soon as she was near enough. She saw! She answered! She changed her course, and came nearer.

It was all hands on deck immediately. We backed the mainyard, swung out the port lifeboat, hastily manned, and with the Captain himself at the tiller, set off for the strange steamer which had come to a stop about a mile off, waiting for us. It was pitch dark. There was a moon,

but it was obscured by heavy clouds. It was a curious sensation, being out on the North Atlantic in a life-boat at night. There was a fair swell, and a little rain began to drop. There was not much wind just then. The ship, a curious and romantic shape looming out of the night with her towers of sails black against the sky and the white half-round of her poop gleaming wet in the rain, slipped back into the blackness which closed around her. The steamer flashed a searchlight on the sea, now and again, both to search for us and to guide us. We pulled steadily, not noticing the distance. We came closer, and saw the huge bulk of the steamer, strangely silent with her engines stopped, dipping and falling in the swell above us. We saw that her people had a rope ladder over the side with a cluster light to guide us. They did everything they could for us. They had a line down, right round their ship, to make our coming alongside easy. We came to the foot of the rope ladder and grabbed the line. The steamer's people lined her decks. It was so dark that we could not see her name.

They had everything ready for us. They lowered food into the boat, and threw us tobacco and newspapers. They gave us a case of milk, two cases of preserved meat, a sack of sugar, several sacks of vegetables, and half the carcass of a cow. They threw us down all the spare tobacco they had, and in the intervals shouted down to us something about themselves, while we shouted in reply something about us. They were the Scottish steamer *Orangeleaf*, they said, Invergordon to Trinidad, to load bitumen for British roads. Our Captain clambered aboard up the rope ladder; no one else went. A fireman came

down and gave us a huge cake which the cook had baked for the stokehold gang that day, being Sunday. We accepted it gratefully, aware that cakes probably did not often come those firemen's way. We each ate a small piece of it; the rest we kept for shipmates still aboard. We asked the steamer's people if they knew anything of the other sailing ships in the wheat race from Australia. They didn't know much. They told us that the *Herzogin Cecilie* had been over a hundred days but had beaten the *Beatrice* again. They didn't seem to know any of the other ships.

We were not alongside long. The Captain came down the ladder again, and the food was all stowed into the boat in a few moments. We prepared to cast off and pull back to the *Grace Harwar* again, now a mile and a half off or more. It had breezed up a little and was raining more heavily. The boat was well loaded; it was a long pull.

A sonorous voice called down from the steamer's bridge to hang on to the line and swing out from the ship's side a bit; they would tow us back. That was grand! We swung out, riding the swells abreast of the steamer, while her engines began to turn and we set slowly off together for our old full-rigged ship. Was there ever such a tow at sea? A four-thousand-ton steamer, upon her voyage of prosaic trade, going out of her way to tow the tiny lifeboat of a full-rigged ship across a mile and a half or so of North Atlantic ocean in the middle of a rainy night back from a borrowing excursion! It was a fine thought of the steamship's captain; they towed us right to the counter of our old full-rigger, leaving us under her very

stern, as neatly as if they had been a motor boat and not a big steamer, unused to such manœuvres. They flashed their searchlight on the ship to show us the way; a moment or two they stayed there, within a biscuit's throw of the sailing ship, while we slipped round her counter and came to the boat falls hanging over the side. Then with cheers and encouraging blasts on their siren, they were off once more upon their voyage. Twenty minutes later there was nothing of the steamer to be seen.

"Pleasant voyage!" the sonorous voice had called from the bridge as the *Orangeleaf* slowly swung under out stern, getting under way again.

We shouted back something in return, and though it was almost midnight when we were back aboard our own ship, the cook got a fire going straight away and we fell to on that beef and made some coffee with sugar and milk in it—luxury of luxuries!

I had the midnight wheel, when the cooking was done. I took a handful of the beef and a mug of the coffee to the wheel with me. It was fine to have something to eat again, and the name of the *Orangeleaf* was blessed among us.

CHAPTER XVI

THE "RACE"

WE were past the Azores when the *Orangeleaf* came to our aid; fifteen days later we were anchored in Queenstown Harbour. It was typical of the whole voyage that we had never been bound to Queenstown. We set off for Falmouth, and that was our destination throughout the voyage. At the end we could not make Falmouth. We could not make the entrance to the Channel. We met nothing but contrary winds, and the best we could do was to strive, under shortened sail, to get into the port of Queenstown. We were lucky to get there.

It made no difference; both were merely order ports, where we should receive orders as to the final destination of the wheat. Any port was a haven to us.

Fifteen days from the region of the Azores up to Queenstown was not fast; the previous year we were only six days from the Azores to Falmouth in the *Herzogin Cecilie*. But it was not bad. We were satisfied to come at all; the old ship did her best. She was becalmed, beset by head winds, belaboured by storms. The tropic belt was left long since by then, of course, and the flying fish were gone. It was cold again, though nothing to the latitudes of the Horn. The seas came sweeping over the low decks again, bringing out the rust on the bulwarks we had so carefully washed, and chipped, and painted, un-

doing all our work. A sail or two was blown out. We saw plenty of steamers as we came nearer to England. Most were nothing much to look at; in the bad weather they rolled and pitched much more heavily than we did. In the calms they still rolled as they passed us by. One, though, made a wonderful sight. It was the big Italian liner *Conte Biancamano*, a two-funnelled vessel of about 27,000 tons, bound from Genoa to New York. We saw her two days after we had the food from the *Orangeleaf*, at first a mere smoke-cloud on the sky from which quickly the shape of a big steamer emerged. She was tearing along; she rushed up from the horizon at us and flew by at a speed of twenty-two knots or so, tearing up the quiet sea with her knife-like bow, setting up so huge a wash that we rolled and floundered in it.

It was a peaceful evening, with little wind. We lay quietly on the sea, slipping along a little under all sail. The big Italian was literally jammed with passengers, massed along her decks drinking in the sight of the old sailer. She flew by so close that we could have dropped a handkerchief aboard; she took the wind—what wind there was—out of our sails. What a sight! It was one of those occasions which make the hell the sailing ship gives you worth while—the cheering passengers, the great bulk of the steamer hurling itself through the placid water, the sun setting behind the scene, bringing to a glorious end the loveliness of day. She dipped her flag to us and we replied. We must have been an interesting sight for her people, with our sweet old ship clad in her full glory and the sun-tanned boys on the foc'sle head, Sjöberg with his shirt hanging out, Rolf and Roy with no shirts at all.

Rolf said the *Conte Biancamano* had more than the entire population of Port Lincoln aboard; Roy, who had never been out of Port Lincoln previously in his life, said he had seen bigger ships. Finila saw only the girls.

The steamer was past before we had time almost to read its name.

The days slipped by a little more pleasantly now that we had something to eat. We put fresh heart into our work; we looked forward to the voyage end, and all that it would mean. We lived only for that. We looked forward only to the coming into port at the end. There was still the worry of the second mate, now much better most of the time; there was still, too, the worry of the wind. Not for an instant through the voyage length may you let up in your anxiety for the wind. It is always ready for some scurvy trick, even in the tropic belts. Jim said that in the *Olivebank* they once had one of the worst blows of the voyage in the doldrums; it blew out seven sails. They were only tropic rags, of course, but their going meant a good deal of work.

On the 130th day we had only a thousand miles more to go. Only a thousand miles more! That was splendid, when we had already sailed fifteen thousand. That was Sunday, August 25; Walker was three months dead that day and his relatives did not know.

The ship was caught badly aback in the morning, when the wind suddenly changed round from the south'ard to somewhere west, strong, with rain. We got her round all right before it; fortunately the kites were not set at the time, and nothing carried away. There was heavy lightning in the east and south-east all night and the day was

gloomy, dull, and constantly threatening rain. When we were not working with the sails we were catching the rain, although port was not far off. Fresh water costs money even in port, and the sailing ship must economise . . . Later the rain cleared, and a little goal-post-masted tramp steamer passed by, heavily rolling, deep-laden and ugly.

The next day the westerly wind held and we ran along about seven knots, heading up for Falmouth. The sail-maker was engaged cutting out the blood-stained cloths from the fore lower t'gallant, from which the blood had never come throughout the voyage. He cut out the bloody cloths, and threw them overboard, stitching in new canvas.

A cruiser, French by the look of her, passed by next day. French Peter had been three years in his country's navy, and was very excited about it, but the cruiser did not come near. We flew our ensign to her but she did not reply. On the 133rd day the wind was heavier, from WSW. and SW., and the royals were fast. Now and then there was solid strength in the wind and it rained heavily, but the poor old ship, struggling at her best, could not exceed eight knots. We did not mind; we knew she was doing her utmost for us. Grand old ship! She had done well to live. It was not her fault if sometimes we had to suffer something. . . .

Part of the mains'l blew out in the night and we had to shorten down, fisting the wet and wind-distended sails in the middle of the gale-filled night. The 134th day was the same—heavy wind, with a rising sea and falling barometer. The fore upper tops'l blew out when we were holding both the fore and main lower t'gallants. There

was nothing for it then but to shorten her down severely. The wind was heavy with almost a Cape Horn roar; it was cold and raining bleakly. But we did not mind! This was fair wind, bearing us on. We regretted that the fore tops'l had gone; otherwise we could have driven her on longer. As soon as there came the slightest let-up in the wind we lay aloft and sent down the blown-out tops'l, replacing it immediately with another one and setting it. We did not want to waste any wind, now that we had it. We changed the mizzen upper tops'l as soon as the fore tops'l was finished, since it had been showing signs of wear and we did not want it to blow out on us.

The next day the wind dropped considerably and we were under all sail again, with a big swell. The day after that we shackled on the cables to both anchors, glorious job significant of the near approach of port. The sailing ship unshackles her cables for her long voyage at sea, sending them down into the chain locker and plugging up the hawsepipes; anchors and chain are a mockery when the ship never comes within a thousand miles of land. The chains are not shackled on again until the final port is approached, and the crew go about the job joyfully, knowing that there should not be many more to follow it. A great three-funnelled steamer passed us by, away on the horizon, bound to the Channel from New York. We thought she was the *Belgenland*, although we could not be sure. At noon we were only 320 miles from Falmouth —glorious news! At nightfall a German cargo steamer, deep-laden from Quebec, slowly overhauled us, coming close and asking with her Morse if there was anything she could do for us. She gave us our longitude and cor-

rect Greenwich mean time, important when we were so close to our landfall and did not know how the chronometers were. While the officers on her bridge were speaking by the Morse with our officers on the poop, somebody from her foc'sle, on the foc'sle head, tried to call up the crew but there was none among us who could read the signals and we had no lamp to reply.

The next day was September 1, and we were 137 days at sea. We had been at sea half April, all May, all June, all July, all August, and now it was September, and we were still upon the road. We saw a little Irish mackerel fisherman carrying sails; we saw a French trawler on its way to the Newfoundland banks; we saw cargo steamers thickly. The wind played us tricks again; at noon we were but two hundred miles from Falmouth. Just one chance more! Just one more day of decent wind, and we would be in with the sails furled and the anchor down. . . . The wind hauled into the south-east and freshened, and we could not head anywhere near Falmouth. Captain Svensson, in desperation, let her go off and headed up for Queenstown.

In the morning the south-easterly wind held, pretty strong. The sea was now changed entirely in colour; the deep blue of the ocean was gone, a shallow green taking its place. The blueness was gone from the sky which was dull grey and characterless. We saw nothing but some trawlers. The wind had a nasty tendency to haul further ahead, scarcely allowing us to head even towards Queenstown. Two little land birds came aboard bedraggled and tired from a long fight with the offshore wind. They soon bucked up, after a little rest, and chirped

cheekily about and ate cockroaches, coming fearlessly into the foc'sle after them. The nigger wanted to catch them for the cat but no one would stand for that.

We picked up a light on the Irish Coast a little before 8 o'clock—just a white flashing light, blinking in the dullness of the night. Nothing much, maybe, but it meant a good deal to us. That was our landfall, and we were come almost to our journey's end, thank God.

The wind hauled further ahead. We shortened down. By midnight we had the lights of Cork Harbour ahead—Crosshaven and Queenstown Heads. We sent up flares for a pilot, and had no answer. We flashed out signals on the Morse and got no reply. There was no other vessel around; the wind was hauling further ahead, almost preventing us from reaching our destination. We continued to send up flares and continued to get no answer. The Captain then decided, since no pilot came, to go on and take the ship in himself, under sail. It was something of an undertaking. He had been in Queenstown once before in the *Grace Harwar*, at the end of the Australian grain race of 1927. It was, he knew, a harbour of strong tides and narrow channels. It was a black night, with rain. The wind was far from favourable.

We stood on, under very short canvas—a tops'l or two and the fores'l. The mate was on the foc'sle head, keeping sharp lookout. Suddenly he saw a great shape of a steamer, lightless and silent, loom out of the pitch-blackness of the night, right ahead. What on earth was this? We just had time to swing the helm and clear her; we found afterwards that this was the wrecked *Celtic*, driven ashore there in the winter gales of 1928 and totally

wrecked. It carried no light on the seaward side: on the land side facing the lighthouse, we saw a weak oil lamp. It was all very well for coasters and the like which knew of the presence of the wrecked steamer, but the stranded *Celtic* there came near to stranding us. We didn't know anything about her. There is quite a lapse of time between the callings of a deep-water sailing ship at a port like that, after her long voyages, and anything may have happened.

We sheered off from the *Celtic* and the strong tide caught us and swept us on into the harbour through the narrow entrance. We came into collision with two buoys, first on the starboard side and then on the port. The noise the buoys made bumping past must have awakened the pilot, asleep in his little cutter anchored in the entrance to the harbour, and he came off to us, very apologetic, rowing across while we slipped through the entrance. He said he did not expect us for a while yet; we had not been reported for fifteen days, and he had an idea we would make for Falmouth as that was the port to which we were posted. That was sound enough; we had no idea of making for Queenstown right up to the end.

He took charge, belatedly, and drank some of the skipper's whisky. The tide carried us into the harbour and a little before 5 o'clock on the morning of September 3, 138 days and eleven hours out from Wallaroo by way of Cape Horn, we came to an anchor. The roar of the cable flying through the hawse was the finest sound of the voyage!

It was long after daylight when we had all the sails fast and the decks clear. French Peter, Bergqvist, and Roy nearly lost their lives on the mizzen t'gallant yard and

came down from the rigging looking pretty white about it. The mizzen t'gallant was a single sail, very deep. It rolled up into a big bunch on the yard. When they had gathered the canvas up and were rolling it back, the bunch that came up was bigger than they allowed for, seeing that the sail was wet, and it flung them from their balance. French Peter managed to grab a gasket end that held; Bergqvist was gone altogether, but Roy, with fine presence of mind, grasped the jackstay by the greatest of good luck and managed to get an arm round Bergqvist, all in the fraction of a second. He held him there until he got a grip of something himself, and none of them came down. It was a narrow shave. We made no secret of the fact, none of us, that we looked forward to the time when we would need to ascend those masts no more.

We were anchored quite close to a fort; around us the Cove of Cork displayed its loveliness. Queenstown was about two miles away, a cluster of old stone houses on a hillside with an enormous cathedral rearing its proud head from the centre of them. It looked almost like the original of the little seaport town which sailors always stick with the ship models that they place in bottles. The sun shone and the green of the fields was beautifully restful to our eyes. Port at last! It meant so much to us, those first few days, that we could not realise it all at once.

There were no orders for the ship, and we remained at anchor. We learnt about the other ships, and how they had fared. We were the last. We had the worst and the longest passage; we were a little surprised to hear that, since in other years there were ships which had been 150 days, 160, 180, and even more than that on the road. We

could name them—*Favell*, *Olivebank*, *Alonso*, *Killoran*, *C. B. Pedersen*, *Mozart*, and all the rest of them. If we with our 138 days were the longest, then the others had not done so badly. We learnt that the Finnish four-master *Archibald Russell* had sailed from Melbourne to Queenstown in ninety-three days. That was good going. The Finnish four-master *Ponape* had sailed from Melbourne to Falmouth in ninety-eight days. That surprised us. She had not left when we set out; her cargo was nearly out when we came in. We learnt that she sailed thirteen days after we left Wallaroo, when we were somewhere between Tasmania and New Zealand, and she arrived at Falmouth twenty-seven days—four weeks all but a day—before we put in an appearance at Queenstown. How was that? We both sailed the same road, by way of Cape Horn. We heard afterwards that she had nothing but fine westerly winds on the way to the Horn, and in the North Atlantic nothing but the best of luck again. It is a curious thing how strong a factor chance can be. A few miles away the wind may be quite different, and a different wind at one stage of the voyage may change the whole passage. It certainly must have done so in the *Ponape's* case.

The *Herzogin Cecilie* we learnt was 104 days from Port Lincoln to Falmouth and had discharged at Birkenhead. She was thirty-one days to Cape Horn, and had bad luck after that, especially in the North Atlantic. The *Beatrice*, which left a week before the big Finnish four-master, was 123 days, despite the fact that she went round the Horn and not by way of Good Hope, as she had done in 1928. It was bad luck in both Atlantics; her people,

we gathered, were not pleased about it. Neither were the *Herzogin Cecilie's*, for that matter, at the fact that the *Ponape* and the *Archibald Russell* had beaten them. They were particularly disturbed about the *Archibald Russell*, which their ship had sailed past easily in the Baltic when both were outward bound to Australia. The Clydesider must have had a great deal of good luck to make the passage in ninety-three days, although she is a fine vessel, of course.

We heard other news about the other ships. Several of them had been in Queenstown: the *Mozart*, *Penang*, *C. B. Pedersen*, and *Archibald Russell* in together. The *Mozart* and the *Penang*, which had sailed out from England together, left Wallaroo on the same day and arrived at Queenstown, after not having seen each other throughout the voyage, within a few hours of each other, the *Mozart* after a passage of 119 days and the *Penang* about twelve hours later, with 120 days. The *Archibald Russell* saw them both at sea, and passed them both, the *Penang* near the Line and the *Mozart* not far from the coast of Ireland. On the outward passage the *Mozart* set out from London and the *Penang* from Cork on the same day, and each not knowing even that the other was at sea, arrived in Spencer Gulf together after a passage of eighty-six days. Then they raced home together again, so that their double voyage round the world must be something of a record. They never saw each other on either the outward nor the homeward voyage, and the *Penang's* people were surprised to find the *Mozart* at anchor when they came into Queenstown at the end of their voyage.

Then there were the *Olivebank* and *Hougomont*, which set out from Port Lincoln about a fortnight before we sailed from Wallaroo. They also made a grand race of it, arriving off Queenstown the same day, within a few hours of each other. My brother, in the *Hougomont*, told me that they were forty-five days to the Horn and did not see the *Olivebank* after the third day at sea until they arrived at Queenstown after a passage of 117 days to find that she had been there four hours before them. It was a close "go"—something like a race. The *Hougomont* went to Avonmouth to discharge and by the time we arrived was almost ready to go to sea again, this time in ballast out to Australia.[1] The *Olivebank* went to Belfast to put out her wheat, and afterwards went to the Baltic to load timber for Australia.

The *C. B. Pedersen* had a good passage of 107 days. The four-master *Pommern*, which left Sydney in the middle of December, 1928, reached Queenstown after a passage of 122 days. The sister ships *Lawhill* and *Garthpool*, the first Finnish and the second Canadian, had exactly the same voyage—130 days, *Lawhill* from Port Lincoln to Falmouth by way of Cape Horn, and *Garthpool* from Port Adelaide to Queenstown by way of the Cape of Good Hope. She was the only sailer in the grain race to choose the Good Hope way that year.

After the *Lawhill* and *Garthpool* we came eight days behind. There was nothing after us.

The voyages of the grain fleet of 1929 may be summarised, then, as follows:

[1] *Hougomont* arrived Port Lincoln December 6, 1929, after a passage of 82 days from Avonmouth. Then chartered to load wheat for Callao.

SHIP	DAYS
Archibald Russell	93
Ponape	98
Herzogin Cecilie	104
C. B. Pedersen	107
Hougomont	117
Olivebank	117
Favell	118
Mozart	119
Penang	120
Pommern	122
Beatrice	123
Lawhill	130
Garthpool	130
Grace Harwar	138

The barques *Winterhude* and *Killoran*, which together with the grain fleet comprised just about all the square-riggers left in commission in the world (disregarding the German nitrate carriers for the moment), were in the guano trade and missed grain charters. The *Killoran* was due at London and the *Winterhude* at Antwerp, we learnt. We gleaned other details about ships. We were always interested in them, no matter what they did to us. We learnt that Captain Gustaf Erikson had bought the four-masters, *Gustav*, *Ponape* and *Viking*. The *Gustav* he renamed *Melbourne;* she was in Melbourne waiting for wheat. The *Beatrice*, *C. B. Pedersen*, *Favell*, *Lawhill*, *Penang*, *Pommern*, and *Mozart* were already on their way again to Australia. The *Hougomont*, *Olivebank*, *Ponape*, *Archibald Russell*, and *Garthpool* were to follow them, the most in ballast. We had no idea what was to become of the *Grace Harwar*.

The German full-rigged ship *Pinnas*, we learnt, had been lost off the Chilean coast. The other vessels of the Laeisz line were making their usual splendid passages from Europe out to Chile and back again, round the Horn both ways. There was no word of the Danish five-master *Kobenhavn*—not the slightest trace. A steamer had been especially chartered to search for her and had come back again after fruitless months with nothing to report. The sea had just closed about the ship, and taken her with no cry, no trace, no sound . . .

We waited ten days at anchor in Queenstown Harbour. There was talk of going to Limerick to discharge, but it came to nothing. We were glad, not that we had anything against Limerick since none of us had ever been there, but it was a long way from London and that was our aim. The Finnish boys wanted to get to Finland and the Britishers to London; no one proposed to stay in the ship if she made another voyage.

There was talk also of Liverpool, Hull, Le Havre, Antwerp, but nothing came of any of the rumours. We hung on from day to day, rowing the Captain in each morning and out again each night, going in with hope in the morning and coming back with nothing at night. Little mail came for us. French Peter and several others of the boys received nothing. The cook heard that his father had died, months before, while we were at sea. Jim heard that his father had died before we left Australia, and he had not known of it because his people did not know where he was until he wrote to them on the eve of our setting out.

The second mate left the ship, poor devil, a day or

two after we got in and went back to Finland with the cook for company. The nigger was installed in the galley. The second mate had no letters. Something seemed to have gone wrong with the ship's mail; we waited and waited, but little came to us. All the letters which we most wanted to receive never came to us; it was a bitter business.

One day a drum of hot tar, heating over an open forge on the foredeck, upset and set fire to the deck. We beat it out, fortunately, before it did any damage. We were set to work scrubbing the rust from the outside of the ship with sand and canvas, since no one could think of a worse job to give us. There was no thought of a spell. There never is, in a sailing ship, especially when it is manned by boys.

We went ashore in the evening sometimes, but since we had to pull ourselves in in the ship's heavy lifeboat, and pull ourselves out again afterwards, there was no great attraction about it. On the first night we bought some food—some eggs and things, and afterwards the boys spent their spare money (very little) on fresh eggs in preference to stale beer. Queenstown was interesting, but we wanted to be off for the port of discharge and be done with the *Grace Harwar* for ever. We knew that we should probably have to sail to the next port and might take anything up to three weeks to get there, wherever it was—it might have been anywhere, from Leith to Danzig.

Then one day Captain Svensson came off with the news that we were to discharge the wheat in Glasgow and a tug was being sent from there to tow us round.

JOURNEY'S END—THE *GRACE HARWAR* ANCHORED IN QUEENSTOWN HARBOUR

DECK VIEW IN SUNNY WEATHER

That was splendid news, especially about the tow. It meant no more sailing, no more dependence on the treacherous wind, no more worries. We had simply to be towed around, tie the ship up somewhere in Glasgow docks, and leave her. That was grand.

The tug came, a strong little chap appropriately named the *Strongbow*, and took us on a long towline, shackling one of his heavy hawsers to our cable. The weather was good when we towed to sea and remained good throughout the tow to Glasgow; we saw much of the Irish coast and many little steamers and light ships, passing them close by and enjoying a thorough look at them; we sent down all the sails and stowed them away in the sail loft aft, in readiness for coming into port. When the wind was fair we set a few sails to help the tug, and since the sun was shining this served also to dry them before cutting them down and stowing them away.

On Saturday, September 14, we entered the Firth of Clyde. It was a glorious day and we enjoyed it to the full. Many big steamers passed us by, Cunarders, White Stars, Anchor Liners, bound to America, the Far East, Australia, Peru. They all came close and cheered the old full-rigger as we passed up the Clyde behind our tug. At the Tail of the Bank another tug came to help us, and with one tug astern and the other ahead, and the decks given over to the charge of a cheerful pilot, we carried on into the night right up the river to our berth.

Shortly after midnight the tugs, with a great deal of congested manœuvring and shrieking of their whistles, nosed us into a remote corner of the Prince's Dock, right beneath the towering sides of a big Furness Withy steamer. We tied up there and the voyage was done.

CHAPTER XVII

JOURNEY'S END

"THE Finnish three-master *Grace Harwar* has arrived here from Wallaroo, Australia, with a cargo of wheat. She will await orders at this port for its disposal. She occupied 138 days on the voyage, and lost one of her crew, an Australian named Walker, through an accident aboard. He was buried at sea. The voyage, regarded here as rather a prolonged one, is described as being uneventful. She sailed into the harbour unaided, and anchored off Spike Point."

So read a message from Queenstown in a Cork newspaper shortly after the ship's arrival there. That was all the newspaper had to say, no reporter coming near the ship. If that voyage was "uneventful" I hope that I never am called upon to serve before the mast in one that really is eventful. We were driven at least a thousand miles out of our course, both when we had to make through Cook Straits and later when we were driven from 25 West to 40 on our passage through the North Atlantic, not to count also our wide sweep through the South Atlantic and the miles we lost by the changing winds down there. We had one of us killed, another went overboard, a third was very badly broken down and did not get better. We were short of food. The ship leaked. She had to fight hard for it more than

once on the voyage. We were 138 days, land to land, and in all that time saw nothing but a glimpse of New Zealand, a distant view of the heights of Staten Island, and a steamer or two. We had to change our destination right at the end. We nearly came to grief on the last night. And, going back over the whole two years' wandering, what a story was there! The troubles and the trials everywhere, the Captain's broken leg outside Luderitz Bay, the many weary thousands of miles the old ship sailed in ballast, looking for a cargo, the hell months at the guano island off the coast of Peru, the death of the youthful sailmaker there, the passage through Panama to Wilmington, the storms and the trials of the voyage from Wilmington down to Australia, when the ship stood out into the gale that sent the *Vestris* down, and lived through it, though she carried the tiniest crew, half of which had never been to sea before. She was short of food before she came to the end of that passage. Other things occurred that surely were "eventful" . . . I wish that I had sailed in the old *Grace Harwar* throughout those two years and had not come in only at the end, for then I should have had a book to write that would have been interesting.

I left her, tied up in that corner of the Glasgow docks, the day after she arrived there. I was glad to leave, and yet sorry also in a way. One learns to respect and admire a ship like that. She looked strangely small with the big empty steamers towering over her, and her masts and yards dwarfed by the dockside cranes and the ugly warehouses. She looked old-fashioned, almost a mistake. The lovely sweep of her old hull, the flowing grace of

her cutwater and the cleanness of her stern were perceptible even as she lay hemmed in there with the barges and steamers all around. She was obviously a creation of leisured beauty. She was unhurried; out of place in an age of speed and quick turn-over and dividend earning. Gazing at her from the opposite quay, one felt that here was an old friend. One knew her so well! That wheel; how many hours had we all spent there? There were twelve of us taking the wheel throughout the voyage, in regular turns; we had, therefore, each been a twelfth of the voyage at the wheel—over twelve days, more than 276 hours. We had put that polish on the varnished teakwood of the poop; we had washed the half-round its clean white, and the bulwarks and the lifeboats too; we had been out in that port lifeboat more than once. We had seen those decks overwhelmed with water; we had seen the seams oozing their pitch in tropic calm. We had toiled until we felt that we could go on no longer at those pumps; we had manned those capstans and laid into those shrouds more times than we could count. We knew each of those yards, the little places where you had to watch for jagged wire and where the jackstay was bent so close down to the yard you could not get a finger under it to hold on. We knew our way aloft on any mast in the blackest night; we knew the places where the ratlines were missing and you had to shin up a bit the best way you could. We knew that foc'sle head, every inch of it, with its lighthouse towers, its capstan, its bits, its jib sheet cleats, its little pinrail. The ship was home to us, and had been for so long that parting was not lightly managed. We knew those decks so well! We

had carried a body along them, had seen one of us go overboard.

And through the whole of the long voyage, oppressed by heavy wind, so weighed down by the maddened sea that she could scarcely stay afloat, shortened down until but a rag or two was all she could show to the wind, dallying in tropic calm, driven out of her course hundreds of miles by unfriendly winds, the lovely old ship responded to all that was asked of her; she came through. She brought us to port. There had been occasions when we thought she could not do it, especially when she was assailed by the serious factor of that leak. But she did not break faith. Unlit, running before a great Cape Horn sea in an ocean shrouded by fog, littered with ice, haunted by the wraiths of a thousand of her sisters which had sailed that way and never come in from the sea again, to any port—she ran on. Lovely old ship!

We handed her over to the stevedores, and hurried away.

What else is there to say? The film? Everything was against that, from the voyage beginning to the voyage end. We set out ill-prepared, with equipment we had no chance to test. We were not photographers, in the sense the film world knows them. Walker was an excellent photographer, with a grand facility for picking up the fine points of the art. I was not a photographer at all. I never have developed a film in my life, though I have exposed plenty. I couldn't do it, even now. I don't know how. When Walker was killed, so early in the voyage, I did not know how to load the cameras with the

film. It was a ticklish operation, and he always did it. We had no dark-room and he shut himself in the cabin, working in the pitch dark there while I kept guard outside to see that no one wandered in and spoilt the film. Guiding the raw film over its spools and cogwheels was a difficult business which I did not care to tackle so long as it was not necessary. And then when it became so suddenly and vitally necessary, I had to do the best I could. I managed, somehow, more by the grace of God than any inherent capacity for the job. I went on, as well as I could, when Walker was dead. I had many troubles. Sometimes the film jammed. One camera was lost. The sea swept into the cabin often and did irreparable damage. It was difficult even to find the heart to carry on, sometimes, with the incessant cold and wet and gloom of the Cape Horn run. There was about five hours of light a day, and often all of that was useless for photography. It was winter, of course, and we were well beyond 50 South. The cameras were difficult to handle aloft, and on deck sprays and seas came over them, and over me, too. I was swept into the scuppers more than once, trying to get shots of breaking seas. More sea came over the camera and over me than on to the film. It was all very difficult. The steel door of the cabin was ill-fitting and the sea came in. There was no dry place in the ship, on the Cape Horn run, and no cool place in the tropics. It was a pretty severe test of cameras and film. I did not even know that the camera was working properly. I could not develop a piece of film to see, and for months went on in ignorance. Off Cape Horn a huge sea broke right through the steel door

of the cabin and flooded everything. I had the film in sealed steel cans, but was by no means sure that that would keep it. It was all that could be done.

And then I was not a passenger, with my sole aim the getting of the film. I was one of the few able seamen in a ship which did not carry a big crew, and had always plenty of work to do. The conditions would have been bad enough, even if one had been a passenger with nothing to do save get the picture. Often the scenes that I most wanted to film, I had to work in—aloft, getting in recalcitrant sails, fighting with a wet tops'l with the sail bellying back over the yard, working round the bole of the mainmast clewing up the mains'l, up to the waist in water—and we had so few hands there was no hope of taking a moment or two for the film. One did not like to ask when the others worked. Before Walker died it was not so bad, and he was able to photograph some most striking scenes of this kind. Afterwards everyone, from the Captain to the cook, did all they could to help. But when there was work it was all hands at it until it was done, and then the light was so bad and the decks so wet. It was a mighty big contract, trying to get that film.

In the North Atlantic Captain Svensson developed a few small pieces from different reels, and for the first time we saw that it was good. The film was keeping; the cameras were working. In the end almost all of the 6,000 feet developed excellently, despite all the crushing disabilities associated with its exposure. It was not a perfect picture, by any means, nor was it the best that could be got out of that voyage. But it was some

record of the ship of sails, battling on a Cape Horn voyage, and Walker's life had not been given in vain.

It meant something, that film, although it could never be a great box-office attraction. Probably it would be a matter of difficulty to induce a firm to make it, renters to interest themselves in it, and theatres to put it on. Troubles were not ended by any means when it was safe ashore and developed . . .

There is little more to say. Everybody left the ship, except the nigger from the *Penang*. Captain Svensson, the mate, the carpenter, Sjölund, Filimon, Hägert, and the sailmaker went home to Finland, the younger of them to navigation school to study for their officers' certificates, and the older for a rest. Sjöberg, Beckman, and Finila, all of whom had also planned to go home, shipped in a Norwegian steamer instead, bound to Halifax and thence to Buenos Aires. At least, she was supposed to go to Buenos Aires. I heard afterwards that she really went rum-running. Bergqvist joined a Swedish steamer, trading to the Baltic. French Peter went to Paris, Rolf and Roy to London. Korhonen, the officers' steward, went home, resolved to ship in sail no more. Jim shipped in a little Bristol Channel collier after a few weeks on the beach. His irrepressible sense of humour never left him. The collier he described to me thus: "She was built by the Royal Navy in 1916 and was used as a Q ship. After the war 40 feet was added to the fore-end of her and they called her a collier. She has a yellow funnel with a red 'A,' a captain, first mate, bos'n, first and second engineers, a donkeyman, four sailors and a black cook. Sprinkle three Arabs about

the stokehold and a heavy layer of coal dust all over her, and you have the worthy vessel." She traded to France and Spain; I gathered there was little comfort in her but always something to eat.

On the third or fourth voyage Jim was in her, she threw herself on her side in some nasty weather in the Bay of Biscay, lost her deck cargo of pit-props overboard, and smashed up some of her crew. Jim was flung across the ship and suffered a broken arm and other injuries, and had to go ashore.

The *Grace Harwar* discharged the wheat at Glasgow, took in some ballast, towed round to Swansea, and loaded there a full cargo of coal for Venezuela. An Ålander who was an able seaman in the *Lawhill* when I was there in 1921 came to take command, with a first mate from the *Ponape* and a second from the *Favell*. With these came twelve boys, none of whom had been in deepwater sail before. Only three of them had been to sea. There were also a carpenter and sailmaker. Manned by this handful, none of whom had any experience of the ship, the *Grace Harwar* stood out into the teeth of an Atlantic gale, bound on her voyage. Eight steamers were lost round the British Isles the week she put to sea; after she was gone, the toll increased. England was lashed by worse gales than it had known for years, and it is never a sheltered isle in November and December. Great passenger liners were driven to seek shelter in Channel ports; over two-score vessels of different kinds were wrecked and six hundred suffered damage, among them the giantesses *Bremen* and *Berengaria* which arrived at New York after Atlantic crossings with heavy deck damage, report-

ing that they had gone through the worst hurricanes in their crew's memory and landing each fifty injured persons. A floating dock broke from its tugs in the North Sea and sank. A big Glasgow steamer was abandoned in a sinking condition in the North Atlantic. Two big sailing ships were lost, the British four-master *Garthpool* and the French barque *Bossuet*, the *Garthpool* on Bonavista island, off the west of Africa, and the *Bossuet* in the Channel. Over three hundred sailors lost their lives. Two steamers, each of them over two thousand tons, were rolled over in the huge seas off Land's End and went down with all hands, watched helplessly from the shore. The gale was so severe that no lifeboat could be launched to help them.

But the *Grace Harwar* sailed on. She did not put back to any port in dire distress. Deep-laden with her coal, undermanned by inexperienced boys, old, strained in many a battle with the gale and the furious sea, she held on. She did not give in.

Nor will she ever; if the break-up yards do not claim her she will close her story with her sails spread from her yards, valiantly carrying on unto the end.

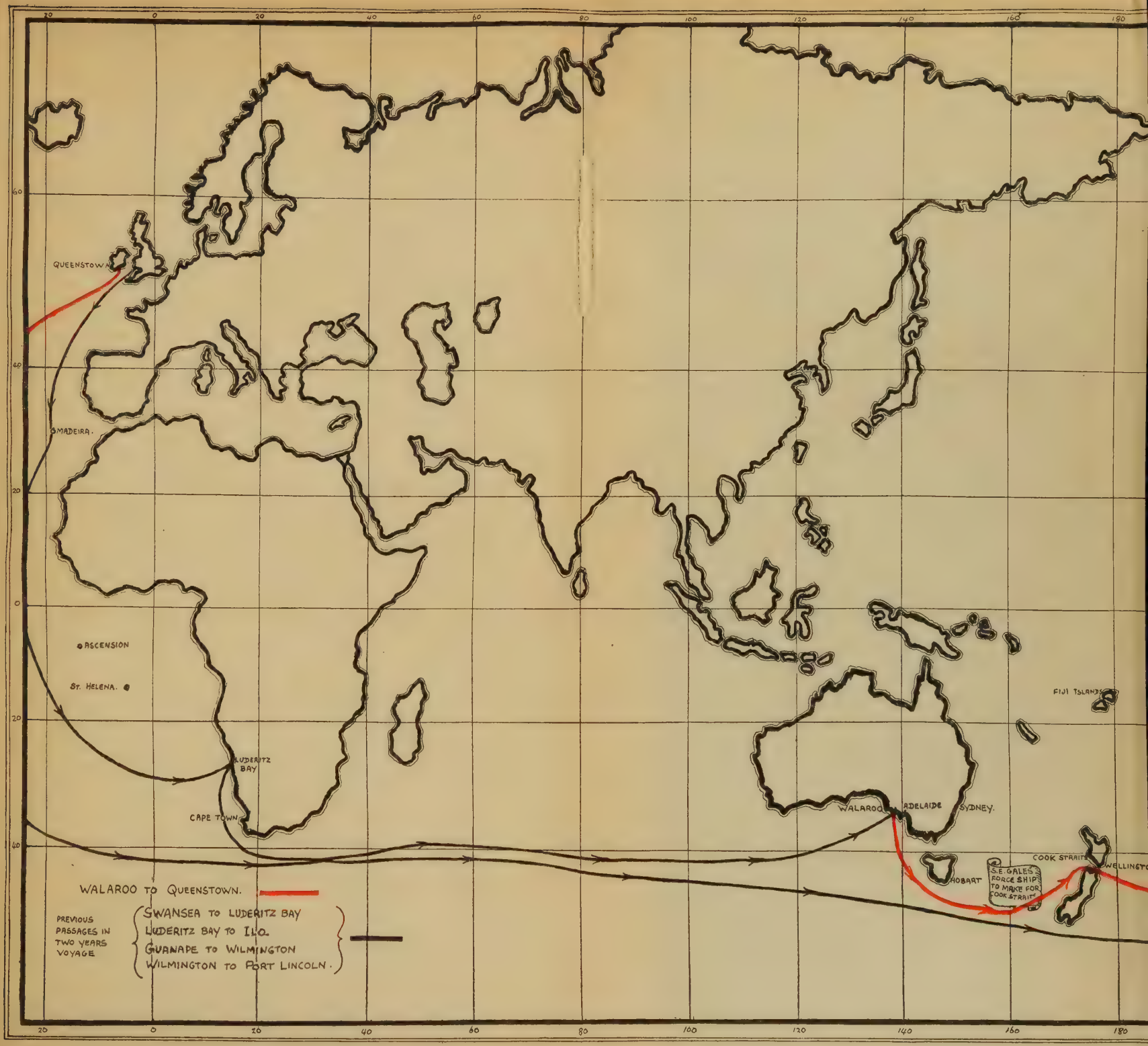
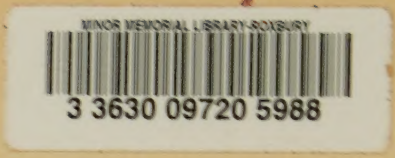


CHART OF THE *GRACE H*

ARWAR'S VOYAGE



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